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# THE COUNT OF MONTE-CRISTO.

VOL. IV.







THE WORKS OF  
ALEXANDRE DUMAS

*The Count of Monte  
Cristo*

*Or, The Adventures of  
Edmond Dantès*

*In Four Volumes  
Volume IV*



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# THE COUNT OF MONTE-CRISTO.

## CHAPTER LXXXII.

### THE BURGLARY.

THE day following that on which the conversation we have related took place, the Count of Monte-Cristo set out for Auteuil, accompanied by Ali and several attendants, and also taking with him some horses whose qualities he was desirous of ascertaining. He was induced to undertake this journey, of which the day before he had not even thought, and which had not either occurred to Andrea, by the arrival of Bertuccio from Normandy, with intelligence respecting the house and sloop. The house was ready, and the sloop, which had arrived the week before, lay at anchor in a small creek, with her crew of six men, who, after having observed all the requisite formalities, were ready again to put to sea.

The count praised Bertuccio's zeal, and ordered him to prepare for a speedy departure, as his stay in France would not be prolonged more than a month.

"Now," said he, "I may require to go in one night from Paris to Treport; let eight fresh horses be in readiness on the road, which will enable me to go fifty leagues in ten hours."

"Your highness has already expressed that wish," said Bertuccio, "and the horses are ready. I have bought them, and stationed them myself at the most desirable posts, namely, in villages where no one generally stops."

"That's well," said Monte-Cristo; "I remain here a day or two, arrange accordingly."

As Bertuccio was leaving the room to give the requisite orders, Baptistin opened the door; he held a letter on a silver waiter.

"What do you do here?" asked the count, seeing him covered with dust; "I did not send for you, I think?"

Baptistin, without answering, approached the count, and presented the letter.

"Important and urgent," said he.

The count opened the letter, and read:

"M. de Monte-Cristo is apprised that this night a man will enter his house in the Champs Elysées with the intention of carrying off some papers supposed to be in the secrétaire in the dressing-room. The count's well-known courage will render unnecessary the aid of the police, whose interference might seriously affect him who sends this advice. The count, by an opening from the bedroom, or by concealing himself in the dressing-room, would be able to defend his property himself. Many attendants or apparent precautions would prevent the villain from the attempt, and M. de Monte-Cristo would lose the opportunity of discovering an enemy whom chance has revealed to him who now sends this warning to the count—a warning he might not be able to send another time, if this first attempt should fail and another be made."

The count's first idea was that this was an artifice—a gross deception, to draw his attention from a minor danger in order to expose him to a greater. He was on the point of sending the letter to the commissaire de police, notwithstanding the advice of his anonymous friend, or, perhaps, *because* of that advice, when suddenly the idea occurred to him that it might be some personal enemy, whom he alone should recognize, and over whom,

if such were the case, he alone could gain any advantage, as Fiesque had done over the Moor who would have killed him.

We know the count's vigorous and daring mind, denying anything to be impossible, with that energy which marks the great man. From his past life, from his resolution to shrink from nothing, the count had acquired an inconceivable relish for the contests in which he had engaged — sometimes against nature, sometimes against the world, which may pass for the devil.

"They do not want my papers," said Monte-Cristo, "they want to kill me; they are no robbers, but assassins. I will not allow M. le préfet de police to interfere with my private affairs. I am rich enough, forsooth, to dispute his authority on this occasion."

The count recalled Baptistin, who had left the room after delivering the letter.

"Return to Paris, assemble the servants who remain there. I want all my household at Auteuil."

"But will no one remain in the house, my lord?" asked Baptistin.

"Yes, the porter."

"My lord will remember that the lodge is at a distance from the house."

"Well?"

"The house might be stripped without his hearing the least noise."

"By whom?"

"By thieves."

"You are a fool, M. Baptistin; thieves might strip the house — it would annoy me less than to be disobeyed."

Baptistin bowed.

"You understand me?" said the count; "bring your comrades here, one and all, but let everything remain as usual, only close the shutters of the ground floor."

"And those of the first floor?"

"You know they are never closed. Go!"

The count signified his intention of dining alone, and that no one but Ali should attend him.

Having dined with his usual tranquillity and moderation, the count, making a signal to Ali to follow him, went out by the side gate, and on reaching the Bois de Boulogne, turned, apparently without design, towards Paris, and at twilight found himself opposite his house in the Champs Elysées. All was dark; one solitary, feeble light was burning in the porter's lodge, about forty paces distant from the house, as Baptistin had said.

Monte-Cristo leaned against a tree, and with that eye which was so rarely deceived, searched the double avenue, examined the passers-by, and carefully looked down the neighboring streets, to see that no one was concealed. Ten minutes passed thus, and he was convinced no one was watching him.

He hastened to the side-door with Ali, entered precipitately, and by the servants' staircase, of which he had the key, gained his bedroom without opening or disarranging a single curtain, without even the porter having the slightest suspicion that the house which he supposed empty contained its chief occupant.

Arrived in his bedroom, the count motioned to Ali to stop; then he passed into the dressing-room, which he examined: all was as usual — the precious *secrétaire* in its place, and the key in the *secrétaire*. He double-locked it, took the key, returned to the bedroom door, removed the double staple of the bolt, and went in.

Meanwhile Ali had procured the arms the count required, namely, a short carbine and a pair of double-barreled pistols, with which as sure an aim might be taken as with a single-barreled one. Thus armed, the count held the lives of five men in his hands.

It was about half-past nine; the count and Ali ate in haste a crust of bread and drank a glass of Spanish wine, then Monte-Cristo slipped aside one of the movable panels, which enabled him to see in the adjoining room. He had

within his reach his pistols and his carbine, and Ali, standing near him, held one of those small Arabian hatchets, whose form has not varied since the Crusades.

Through one of the windows of the bedroom, on a line with that in the dressing-room, the count could see into the street.

Two hours passed thus. It was intensely dark; still, Ali, thanks to his wild nature, and the count, thanks, doubtless, to his long confinement, could distinguish in the darkness the slightest movement of the trees.

The little light in the lodge had been long extinct.

It might be expected that the attack, if indeed an attack were projected, would be made from the staircase of the ground floor, and not from a window; in Monte-Cristo's idea, the villains sought his life, not his money. It would be his bedroom they would attack, and they must reach it by the back staircase, or by the window in the dressing-room.

The clock of the Invalides struck a quarter to twelve; the west wind bore on its moistened gusts the doleful vibration of the three strokes. As the last stroke died away, the count thought he heard a slight noise in the dressing-room; this first sound, or, rather, this first grinding was followed by a second, then, a third; at the fourth the count knew what to expect. A firm and well-practised hand was engaged in cutting the four sides of a pane of glass with a diamond.

The count felt his heart beat more rapidly. Inured as men may be to danger, forewarned as they may be of peril, they understand, by the fluttering of the heart and the shuddering of the frame, the enormous difference between a dream and reality — between the project and the execution.

However, Monte-Cristo only made a sign to apprise Ali, who, understanding that danger was approaching from the other side, drew nearer to his master.

Monte-Cristo was eager to ascertain the strength and number of his enemies.



The window whence the noise proceeded was opposite the opening by which the count could see into the dressing-room. He fixed his eyes on that window: he distinguished a shadow in the darkness; then one of the panes became quite opaque, as if a sheet of paper were stuck on the outside, then the square cracked without falling. Through the opening an arm was passed to find the fastening, then a second; the window turned on its hinges, and a man entered. He was alone.

"That's a daring rascal!" whispered the count.

At that moment Ali touched him slightly on the shoulder; he turned. Ali pointed to the window of the room in which they were, facing the street.

"Good!" said he, "there are two of them; one acts while the other watches."

He made a sign to Ali not to lose sight of the man in the street, and returned to the one in the dressing-room.

The glass-cutter had entered, and was feeling his way, his arms stretched out before him. At last he appeared to have made himself familiar with all parts. There were two doors; he bolted them both.

When he drew near to that of the bedroom, Monte-Cristo expected he was coming in, and raised one of his pistols; but he simply heard the sound of the bolts sliding in their copper rings. It was only a precaution.

The nocturnal visitor, ignorant of the count's having removed the staples, might now think himself at home, and pursue his purpose with full security.

Alone and uncontrolled, the man then drew from his pocket something which the count could not discern, placed it on a stand, then went straight to the secrétaire, felt the lock, and, contrary to his expectation, found that the key was missing. But the glass-cutter was a prudent man, who had provided for all emergencies. The count soon heard the rattling of a bunch of shapeless keys, such as the locksmith brings when called to force a lock, and

which thieves call nightingales, doubtless from the music of their nightly song when they turn the precious lock.

"Ah! ah!" whispered Monte-Cristo, with a smile of disappointment, "he is only a thief!"

But the man in the dark could not find the right key. He reached the instrument he had placed on the stand, touched a spring, and immediately a pale light, just bright enough to render objects distinct, was reflected on the hands and countenance of the man.

"Hold!" exclaimed Monte-Cristo, starting back, "it is ——"

Ali raised his hatchet.

"Don't stir," whispered Monte-Cristo, "and put down your hatchet; we shall require no arms."

Then he added some words in a low tone, for the exclamation which surprise had drawn from the count, weak as it had been, had startled the man, who remained in the position of the old grinder.

It was an order the count had just given, for immediately Ali went noiselessly and returned, bearing a black dress and a three-cornered hat. Meanwhile, Monte-Cristo had rapidly taken off his great-coat, waistcoat, and shirt, and one might distinguish by the glimmering through the open panel that he wore one of those pliant tunics of steel mail, of which the last in France, where daggers are no longer feared, was worn by King Louis XVI., who feared the dagger at his breast, and whose head was cleft with a hatchet.

This tunic soon disappeared under a long cassock, as did his hair under a priest's wig; the three-cornered hat over this effectually transformed the count into an abbé.

The man, hearing nothing more, had again raised himself, and while Monte-Cristo was completing his disguise, had advanced straight to the secrétaire, whose lock was beginning to crack under his nightingale.

"Well done!" whispered the count, who depended on

the secret spring, which was unknown to the picklock, clever as he might be—"well done! you have a few minutes' work there." And he advanced to the window.

The man whom he had seen seated on a fence had got down, and was still pacing the street; but strange as it appeared, he cared not for those who might pass from the avenue of the Champs Elysées or by the Faubourg St. Honore; his attention was engrossed with what was passing at the count's, and his only aim appeared to be to discern every movement in the dressing-room.

Monte-Cristo suddenly struck his finger on his forehead, and a smile passed over his lips. Then drawing near to Ali, he whispered:

"Remain here, concealed in the dark, and whatever noise you hear, whatever passes, only come in, or show yourself, if I call you."

Ali bowed in token of strict obedience.

Monte-Cristo then drew a lighted taper from a closet, and when the thief was deeply engaged with his lock, silently opened the door, taking care that the light should shine directly on his face.

The door opened so quietly that the thief heard no sound. But, to his astonishment, the room was in a moment light. He turned.

"Good evening, dear M. Caderousse!" said Monte-Cristo; "what are you doing here at such an hour?"

"The Abbé Busoni!" exclaimed Caderousse; and, not knowing how this strange apparition could have entered when he had bolted the doors, he let fall his bunch of keys and remained motionless and stupefied.

The count placed himself between Caderousse and the window, thus cutting off from the thief his only chance of retreat.

"The Abbé Busoni!" repeated Caderousse, fixing his haggard gaze on the count.

"Yes, doubtless! the Abbé Busoni himself," replied Monte-Cristo, "and I am very glad you recognize me, dear

M. Caderousse; it proves you have a good memory, for it must be about ten years since we last met."

This calmness of Busoni, combined with his irony and boldness, staggered Caderousse.

"L'abbé, l'abbé!" murmured he, clinching his fists, and his teeth chattering.

"So you would rob the Count of Monte-Cristo?" continued the false abbé.

"M. l'abbé," murmured Caderousse, seeking to regain the window, which the count pitilessly intercepted — "M. l'abbé, I don't know — believe me — I take my oath —"

"A pane of glass out," continued the count, "a dark lantern, a bunch of false keys, a secrétaire half forced; it is tolerably evident —"

Caderousse was choking; he looked around for some corner to hide in — some way of escape.

"Come, come," continued the count, "I see you are still the same — an assassin."

"M. l'abbé, since you know everything, you know it was not I, it was La Carconte; that was proved at the trial, since I was only condemned to the galleys."

"Is your time then expired, since I find you in a fair way to return there?"

"No, M. l'abbé, I have been liberated by some one."

"That some one has done society a great kindness."

"Ah!" said Caderousse, "I had promised —"

"And you are breaking your promise!" interrupted Monte-Cristo.

"Alas, yes!" said Caderousse, very uneasily.

"A bad relapse! That will lead you, if I mistake not, to the Place de Grève. So much the worse — so much the worse, *diavolo!* as they say in my country."

"M. l'abbé, I am impelled —"

"Every criminal says the same thing."

"Poverty —"

"Pshaw!" said Busoni, disdainfully; "poverty may

make a man beg, steal a loaf of bread at a baker's door, but not cause him to open a secrétaire in a house supposed to be inhabited. And when the jeweler Joannes had just paid you 45,000 francs for the diamond I had given you, and you killed him to get the diamond and the money both, was that also poverty?"

"Pardon, M. l'abbé!" said Caderousse, "you have saved my life once, save me again!"

"That is but poor encouragement."

"Are you alone, M. l'abbé, or have you there soldiers ready to seize me?"

"I am alone," said the abbé, "and I will again have pity on you and will let you escape, at the risk of the fresh miseries my weakness may lead to, if you tell me the truth."

"Ah, M. l'abbé," cried Caderousse, clasping his hands and drawing nearer to Monte-Cristo, "I may indeed say you are my deliverer!"

"You mean to say you have been freed from confinement?"

"Yes, in truth, M. l'abbé."

"Who was your liberator?"

"An Englishman."

"What was his name?"

"Lord Wilmore."

"I know him; I shall know if you lie."

"M. l'abbé, I tell you the simple truth."

"Was this Englishman protecting you?"

"No, not me, but a young Corsican, my companion."

"What was this young Corsican's name?"

"Benedetto."

"Is that his Christian name?"

"He had no other; he was a foundling."

"Then this young man escaped with you?"

"He did."

"In what way?"

"We were working at St. Mandrier, near Toulon. Do you know St. Mandrier?"

"I do."

"In the hour of rest, between noon and one o'clock ——"

"Galley-slaves having a nap after dinner! We may well pity the poor fellows!" said the abbé.

"Nay," said Caderousse, "one can't always work — one is not a dog!"

"So much the better for the dogs!" said Monte-Cristo.

"While the rest slept, then, we went away a short distance; we severed our fetters with a file the Englishman had given us, and swam away."

"And what is become of this Benedetto?"

"I don't know."

"You ought to know."

"No, in truth; we parted at Hyeres."

And to give more weight to this protestation, Caderousse advanced another step towards the abbé, who remained motionless in his place, as calm as ever, and pursuing his interrogation.

"You lie!" said the Abbé Busoni, with a tone of irresistible authority.

"M. l'abbé!"

"You lie! This man is still your friend, and you perhaps make use of him as your accomplice."

"Oh, monsieur l'abbé!"

"Since you left Toulon, what have you lived on? Answer me!"

"On what I could get."

"You lie!" repeated the abbé a third time, with a still more imperative tone.

Caderousse, terrified, looked at the count.

"You have lived on the money he has given you."

"True!" said Caderousse; "Benedetto has become the son of a great lord."

"How can he be the son of a great lord?"

"A natural son."

"And what is that great lord's name?"

"The Count of Monte-Cristo, the very same in whose house we are."

"Benedetto the count's son!" replied Monte-Cristo, astonished in his turn.

"Forsooth! I suppose so, since the count has found him a false father—since the count gives him four thousand francs a month, and leaves him 500,000 francs in his will."

"Ah! ah!" said the false abbé, who began to understand; "and what name does this young man bear meanwhile?"

"Andrea Cavalcanti."

"Is it, then, that young man whom my friend the Count of Monte-Cristo has received into his house, and who is going to marry Mademoiselle Danglars?"

"Exactly."

"And you suffer that, you wretch!—you who know his life and his crime?"

"Why should I stand in a comrade's way?" said Caderousse.

"You are right; it is not you who should apprise M. Danglars, it is I."

"Do not do so, M. l'abbé."

"Why not?"

"Because you would bring us to ruin."

"And you think that to save such villains as you I will become an abettor of their plot—an accomplice in their crimes?"

"M. l'abbé," said Caderousse, drawing still nearer.

"I will expose all."

"To whom?"

"To M. Danglars."

"By heaven!" cried Caderousse, drawing from his waistcoat an open knife, and striking the count in the breast, "you shall disclose nothing, M. l'abbé."

To Caderousse's great astonishment, the knife, instead of piercing the count's breast, flew back blunted.

At the same moment the count seized with his left hand the assassin's wrist, and wrung it with such strength that the knife fell from his stiffened fingers, and Caderousse uttered a cry of pain. But the count, disregarding his cry, continued to wring the bandit's wrist until, his arm being dislocated, he fell first on his knees, then flat on the floor.

The count then placed his foot on his head, saying :

"I know not what restrains me from crushing thy skull, rascal !"

"Ah, mercy — mercy !" cried Caderousse.

The count withdrew his foot.

"Rise !" said he.

Caderousse rose.

"What a wrist you have, M. l'abbé !" said Caderousse, stroking his arm, all bruised by the fleshy pincers which had held it — "what a wrist !"

"Silence ! God gives me strength to overcome a wild beast like you ; in the name of that God I act — remember that, wretch ! — and to spare thee at this moment is still serving him."

"Oh !" said Caderousse, groaning with pain.

"Take this pen and paper and write what I dictate."

"I don't know how to write, M. l'abbé."

"You lie ! Take this pen and write !"

Caderousse, awed by the superior power of the abbé, sat down and wrote :

"SIR : — The man whom you are receiving at your house, and to whom you intend to marry your daughter, is a felon who escaped with me from confinement at Toulon. He was No. 59 and I No. 58. He was called Benedetto ; but he is ignorant of his real name, having never known his parents."

"Sign it !" continued the count.

"But would you ruin me ?"



"If I sought your ruin, fool, I should drag you to the first guard-house; besides, when that note is delivered, in all probability you will have no more to fear. Sign it, then!"

Caderousse signed it.

"The address: — A Monsieur le Baron Danglars, banker, Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin."

Caderousse wrote the address. The abbé took the note.

"Now," said he, "that suffices — begone!"

"Which way?"

"The way you came."

"You wish me to get out at that window?"

"You got in very well."

"Oh! you have some design against me, M. l'abbé."

"Idiot! what design can I have?"

"Why, then, not let me out by the door?"

"What would be the advantage of waking the porter?"

"M. l'abbé, tell me, do you not wish me dead?"

"I wish what God wills."

"But swear that you will not strike me as I go down."

"Cowardly fool!"

"What do you intend doing with me?"

"I ask you what can I do? I have tried to make you a happy man, and you have turned out a murderer."

"M. l'abbé," said Caderousse, "make one more attempt — try me once more!"

"I will," said the count. "Listen! — you know if I may be relied on."

"Yes," said Caderousse.

"If you arrive safely at home —"

"What have I to fear except from you?"

"If you reach your home safely, leave Paris, leave France; and wherever you may be, so long as you conduct yourself well, I will send you a small annuity; for, if you return home safely, then —"

"Then?" asked Caderousse, shuddering.

"Then I shall believe God has forgiven you, and I will forgive you, too."

"As true as I am a Christian," stammered Caderousse, "you will make me die of fright!"

"Now, begone!" said the count, pointing to the window.

Caderousse, scarcely yet relying on this promise, put his legs out of the window and stood on the ladder.

"Now go down," said the abbé, folding his arms. Understanding he had nothing more to fear from him, Caderousse began to go down.

Then the count brought the taper to the window, that it might be seen in the Champs Elysées that a man was getting out of the window while another held a light.

"What are you doing, M. l'abbé? Suppose a watchman should pass?"

And he blew out the light.

He then descended, but it was only when he felt his foot touch the ground that he was satisfied he was safe.

Monte-Cristo returned to his bedroom, and glancing rapidly from the garden to the street, he saw first Caderousse, who, after walking to the end of the garden, fixed his ladder against the wall at a different part from where he came in.

The count, then looking over into the street, saw the man who appeared to be waiting run in the same direction, and place himself against the angle of the wall where Caderousse would come over.

Caderousse climbed the ladder slowly, and looked over the coping to see if the street was quiet.

No one could be seen or heard.

The clock of the Invalides struck one.

Then Caderousse sat astride the coping, and drawing up his ladder, passed it over the wall; then began to descend, or rather to slide down by the two stanchions, which he did with an ease which proved how accustomed he was to the exercise.

But once started, he could not stop. In vain did he see

a man start from the shade when he was half-way down — in vain did he see an arm raised as he touched the ground. Before he could defend himself that arm struck him so violently in the back, that he let go the ladder, crying, "Help!"

A second blow struck him almost immediately in the side, and he fell, calling, "Help! murder!"

Then, as he rolled on the ground, his adversary seized him by the hair, and struck him a third blow in the chest.

This time Caderousse endeavored to call again, but he could only utter a groan, and he shuddered as the blood flowed from his three wounds.

The assassin, finding he no longer cried, lifted his head up by the hair; his eyes were closed, his mouth distorted. The murderer, supposing him dead, let fall his head and disappeared.

Then Caderousse, feeling that he was leaving him, raised himself on his elbow, and with a dying voice cried with great effort:

"Murder! I am dying! Help, M. l'abbé — help!"

This mournful appeal pierced the darkness. The door of the back staircase opened, then the side gate of the garden, and Ali and his master were on the spot with lights.

## CHAPTER LXXXIII.

## THE HAND OF GOD.

CADEROUSSE continued to call piteously:

"M. l'abbé, help! help!"

"What is the matter?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"Help!" cried Caderousse; "I am murdered!"

"We are here — take courage!"

"Ah! it's all over! You are come too late — you are come to see me die. What blows! what blood!"

He fainted.

Ali and his master conveyed the wounded man into a room. Monte-Cristo motioned to Ali to undress him, and he then examined his dreadful wounds.

"My God!" he exclaimed, "thy vengeance is sometimes delayed, but only that it may fall the more effectually."

Ali looked at his master for further instructions.

"Conduct here immediately the procureur du roi, M. de Villefort, who lives in the Faubourg St. Honore. As you pass the lodge, wake the porter, and send him for a surgeon."

Ali obeyed, leaving the abbé alone with Caderousse, who had not yet revived.

When the wretched man again opened his eyes, the count looked at him with a mournful expression of pity, and his lips moved as if in prayer.

"A surgeon, M. l'abbé — a surgeon!" said Caderousse.

"I have sent for one," replied the abbé.

"I know he cannot save my life, but he may strengthen me to give my evidence."

"Against whom?"

"Against my murderer."

"Did you recognize him?"

"Yes — it was Benedetto."

"The young Corsican?"

"Himself."

"Your comrade?"

"Yes. After giving me the plan of this house, doubtless hoping I should kill the count and he thus become his heir, or that the count would kill me and I should be out of his way, he waylaid me, and has murdered me."

"I have also sent for the procureur du roi."

"He will not come in time; I feel my life fast ebbing."

"Stop!" said Monte-Cristo.

He left the room, and returned in five minutes with a vial.

The dying man's eyes were all the time riveted on the door, through which he hoped succor would arrive.

"Hasten, M. l'abbé — hasten! I shall faint again!"

Monte-Cristo approached, and dropped on his purple lips three or four drops of the contents of the vial.

Caderousse drew a deep breath.

"Oh!" said he, "that is life to me; more, more!"

"Two drops more would kill you," replied the abbé.

"Oh, send for some one to whom I can denounce the wretch!"

"Shall I write your deposition? You can sign it."

"Yes, yes," said Caderousse; and his eyes glistened at the thought of this posthumous revenge.

Monte-Cristo wrote:

"I die murdered by the Corsican Benedetto, my comrade in the galleys at Toulouse, No. 59."

"Quick, quick!" said Caderousse, "or I shall be unable to sign it."

Monte-Cristo gave the pen to Caderousse, who collected all his strength, signed it, and fell back on the bed, saying:

"You will relate all the rest, M. l'abbé; you will say he

calls himself Andrea Cavalcanti. He lodges at the Hôtel des Princes. Oh, I am dying!"

He again fainted.

The abbé made him smell the contents of the vial, and he again opened his eyes. His desire for revenge had not forsaken him.

"Ah! you will tell all I have said: will you not, M. l'abbé?"

"Yes, and much more."

"What more will you say?"

"I will say he had doubtless given you the plan of this house, in the hope the count would kill you. I will say, likewise, he had apprised the count, by a note, of your intention; and the count being absent, I read the note, and sat up to await you."

"And he will be guillotined, will he not?" said Caderousse. "Promise me that, and I will die with that hope."

"I will say," continued the count, "that he followed and watched you the whole time, and when he saw you leave the house, ran to the angle of the wall to conceal himself."

"Did you see all that?"

"Remember my words: 'If you return home safely, I shall believe God has forgiven you, and will forgive you also.'"

"And you did not warn me!" cried Caderousse, raising himself on his elbows. "You knew I should be killed on leaving this house, and did not warn me!"

"No, for I saw God's justice placed in the hands of Benedetto, and should have thought it sacrilege to oppose the designs of Providence."

"God's justice! Speak not of it, M. l'abbé. If God were just, you know many would be punished who now escape."

"Patience!" said the abbé, in a tone which made the dying man shudder — "have patience!"

Caderousse looked at him with amazement.

"Besides," said the abbé, "God is merciful to all, as he has been to you; he is first a father, then a judge."

"Do you, then, believe in God?" said Caderousse.

"Had I been so unhappy as not to believe in him until now," said Monte-Cristo, "I must believe on seeing you."

Caderousse raised his clinched hands towards heaven.

"Listen," said the abbé, extending his hand over the wounded man, as if to command him to believe; "this is what the God in whom, on your deathbed, you refuse to believe, has done for you: he gave you health, strength, regular employment, even friends — a life, in fact, which a man might enjoy with a calm conscience. Instead of improving these gifts, rarely granted so abundantly, this has been your course: you have given yourself up to sloth and drunkenness, and in a fit of intoxication have ruined your best friend."

"Help!" cried Caderousse; "I require a surgeon, not a priest; perhaps I am not mortally wounded — I may not die; perhaps they can yet save my life."

"Your wounds are so far mortal, that without the three drops I gave you, you would now be dead. Listen then."

"Ah!" murmured Caderousse, "what a strange priest you are! you drive the dying to despair instead of consoling them."

"Listen," continued the abbé; "when you had betrayed your friend, God began not to strike, but to warn you; poverty overtook you; you had already passed half your life in coveting that which you might have honorably acquired, and already you contemplated crime under the excuse of want when God worked a miracle in your behalf, sending you, by my hands, a fortune — brilliant, indeed, for you, who had never possessed any. But this unexpected, un hoped-for, unheard-of fortune sufficed you no longer when once you possessed it; you wished to double it; and how? by a murder! You succeeded, and then God snatched it from you, and brought you to justice."

"It was not I who wished to kill the Jew," said Caderousse, "it was La Carconte."

"Yes," said Monte-Cristo, "and God, I cannot say in justice, for his justice would have slain you — God, in his mercy, spared your life."

"*Pardieu!* to transport me for life; how merciful!"

"You thought it a mercy then, miserable wretch! The coward who feared death rejoiced at perpetual disgrace, for, like all galley-slaves, you said, 'I may escape from prison, I cannot from the grave.' And you said truly; the way was opened for you unexpectedly: an Englishman visited Toulouse, who had vowed to rescue two men from infamy, and his choice fell on you and your companion; you received a second fortune; money and tranquillity were restored to you, and you, who had been condemned to a felon's life, might live as other men; then, wretched creature! then you tempted God a third time. 'I have not enough,' you said when you had more than you before possessed, and you committed a third crime without reason, without excuse. God is wearied — he has punished you."

Caderousse was fast sinking.

"Give me drink," said he; "I thirst — I burn!"

Monte-Cristo gave him a glass of water.

"And yet that villain Benedetto will escape!"

"No one, I tell you, will escape; Benedetto will be punished."

"Then you, too, will be punished, for you did not do your duty as a priest — you should have prevented Benedetto from killing me."

"I!" said the count with a smile which petrified the dying man, "when you had just broken your knife against the coat of mail which protected my breast! Yet, perhaps, if I had found you humble and penitent, I might have prevented Benedetto from killing you; but I found you proud and bloodthirsty, and I left you in the hands of God."



"I do not believe there is a God!" howled Caderousse; "you do not believe it; you lie — you lie!"

"Silence!" said the abbé; "you will force the last drop of blood from your veins. What! do you not believe in God when he is striking you dead? — you will not believe in him who requires but a prayer, a word, a tear, and he will forgive? God, who might have directed the assassin's dagger so as to end your career in a moment, has given you this quarter of an hour for repentance. Reflect, then, wretched man, and repent."

"No," said Caderousse — "no; I will not repent; there is no God, there is no Providence — all comes by chance."

"There is a Providence, there is a God," said Monte-Cristo, "of which you are a striking proof, as you lie in utter despair, denying him; while I stand before you, rich, happy, safe, and entreating that God in whom you endeavor not to believe, while in your heart you still believe in him."

"But who are you then?" asked Caderousse, fixing his dying eyes on the count.

"Look at me!" said Monte-Cristo, putting the light near his face.

"Well! the abbé — the Abbé Busoni."

Monte-Cristo took off the wig which disfigured him, and let fall his black hair, which added so much to the beauty of his pallid features.

"Oh!" said Caderousse, thunderstruck, "but for that black hair I should say you were the Englishman, Lord Wilmore."

"I am neither the Abbé Busoni nor Lord Wilmore," said Monte-Cristo; "think again: do you not recollect me?"

There was a magic effect in the count's words which once more revived the exhausted powers of the miserable man.

"Yes, indeed," said he, "I think I have seen you and known you formerly."

"Yes, Caderousse, you have seen me; you knew me once."

"Who, then, are you? and why, if you know me, do you let me die?"

"Because nothing can save you—your wounds are mortal. Had it been possible to save your life, I should have considered it another proof of God's mercy, and I would again have endeavored to restore you, I swear by my father's tomb."

"By your father's tomb!" said Caderousse, supported by a supernatural power, and half raising himself to see more distinctly the man who had just taken this oath which all men hold sacred; "who, then, are you?"

The count had watched the approach of death. He knew this was the last struggle—he approached the dying man, and leaning over him with a calm and melancholy look, he whispered:

"I am — I am —"

And his almost closed lips uttered a name so low that the count himself appeared afraid to hear it.

Caderousse, who had raised himself on his knees, and stretched out his arms, tried to draw back, then clasping his hands, and raising them with a desperate effort:

"Oh! my God! my God!" said he, "pardon me for having denied thee; thou dost exist; thou art, indeed, man's father in heaven, and his judge on earth. My God, my Lord, I have long despised thee! Pardon me, my God; receive me, O my Lord!"

Caderousse sighed deeply, and fell back with a groan. The blood no longer flowed from his wounds. He was dead.

"One!" said the count mysteriously, his eyes fixed on the corpse, disfigured by so awful a death.

Ten minutes afterward the surgeon and procureur du roi arrived, the one accompanied by the porter, the other by Ali, and were received by the Abbé Busoni, who was praying by the side of the corpse.

## CHAPTER LXXXIV.

## BEAUCHAMP.

THE daring attempt to rob the count was the topic of conversation throughout Paris for the next fortnight; the dying man had signed a deposition declaring Benedetto to be the assassin. The police had orders to make the strictest search for the murderer.

Caderousse's knife, dark lantern, bunch of keys, and clothing, excepting the waistcoat which could not be found, were deposited at the registry; the corpse was conveyed to La Morgue. The count told every one this adventure had happened during his absence at Auteuil, and that he only knew what was related by the Abbé Busoni, who that evening, by mere chance, had requested to pass the night in his house to examine some valuable books in his library. Bertuccio alone turned pale whenever Benedetto's name was mentioned in his presence, but there was no reason why any one should notice his doing so. Villefort, being called on to prove the crime, was preparing the brieve with the same ardor as he was accustomed to exercise when called on to speak in criminal cases.

But three weeks had already passed, and the most diligent search had been unsuccessful; the attempted robbery and the murder of the robber by his comrade were almost forgotten in anticipation of the approaching marriage of Mademoiselle Danglars to the Count Andrea Cavalcanti. It was expected this wedding would shortly take place, as the young man was received at the banker's as the betrothed. Letters had been dispatched to M. Cavalcanti,

the count's father, who highly approved of the union, regretting his inability to leave Parma at that time, and promising a wedding-gift of a hundred and fifty thousand livres. It was agreed that the three millions should be entrusted to Danglars to improve; some persons had warned the young man of the circumstances of his future father-in-law, who had of late sustained repeated losses, but with sublime disinterestedness and confidence the young man refused to listen, or to express a single doubt to the baron.

The baron adored Count Andrea Cavalcanti; not so Mademoiselle Eugenie Danglars. With an instinctive hatred of matrimony, she suffered Andrea's attentions in order to get rid of Morcerf; but when Andrea urged his suit, she betrayed an utter dislike to him. The baron might possibly have perceived it, but, attributing it to caprice, feigned ignorance.

The delay demanded by Beauchamp had nearly expired. Morcerf appreciated the advice of Monte-Cristo to let things die away of their own accord; no one had taken up the remark about the general, and no one had recognized in the officer who betrayed the castle of Yanina the noble count in the House of Peers.

Albert, however, felt no less insulted; the few lines which had irritated him were certainly intended as an insult. Besides, the manner in which Beauchamp had closed the conference left a bitter recollection in his heart. He cherished the thought of the duel, hoping to conceal its true cause even from the seconds. Beauchamp had not been seen since the day he was visited by Albert; and those of whom the latter inquired always told him he was out on a journey which would detain him some days. Where he was no one knew.

One morning Albert was awakened by his valet de chambre, who announced Beauchamp. Albert rubbed his eyes, ordered his servant to introduce him into the small smoking-room on the ground floor, dressed himself quickly

and went down. He found Beauchamp pacing the room; on perceiving him Beauchamp stopped.

"Your arrival here, without waiting my visit at your house to-day, looks well, sir," said Albert. "Tell me, may I shake hands with you, saying, 'Beauchamp, acknowledge you have injured me, and retain my friendship,' or must I simply propose to you a choice of arms?"

"Albert," said Beauchamp, with a look of sorrow which stupefied the young man, "let us first sit down and talk."

"Rather, sir, before we sit down, I must demand your answer."

"Albert," said the journalist, "these are questions which it is difficult to answer."

"I will facilitate it by repeating the question, 'Will you, or will you not, retract?'"

"Morcerf, it is not enough to answer Yes or No to questions which concern the honor, the social interest, and the life of such a man as the Lieutenant-General Count de Morcerf, peer of France."

"What must then be done?"

"What I have done, Albert. I reasoned thus: Money, time, and fatigue are nothing compared with the reputation and interests of a whole family; probabilities will not suffice, only facts will justify a deadly combat with a friend. If I strike with the sword, or discharge the contents of a pistol at a man with whom, for three years, I have been on terms of intimacy, I must, at least, know why I do so; I must meet him with a heart at ease, and that quiet conscience which a man needs when his own arm must save his life."

"Well," asked Morcerf, impatiently, "what does all this mean?"

"It means that I have just returned from Yanina."

"From Yanina?"

"Yes."

"Impossible!"

"Here is my passport; examine the *visa* — Geneva,

Milan, Venice, Trieste, Delvino, Yanina. Will you believe the government of a republic, a kingdom, and an empire?"

Albert cast his eyes on the passport, then raised them in astonishment to Beauchamp.

"You have been to Yanina?" said he.

"Albert, had you been a stranger, a simple lord, like that Englishman who came to demand satisfaction three or four months since, and whom I killed to get rid of, I should not have taken this trouble; but I thought this mark of consideration due to you. I took a week to go, another to return, four days of quarantine, and forty-eight hours to stay there; that makes three weeks. I returned last night; and here I am."

"What circumlocution! How long you are before you tell me what I most wish to know!"

"Because, in truth, Albert ——"

"You hesitate!"

"Yes — I fear."

"You fear to acknowledge that your correspondent has deceived you? Oh! no self-love, Beauchamp. Acknowledge it, Beauchamp; your courage cannot be doubted."

"Not so," murmured the journalist; "on the contrary ——"

Albert turned frightfully pale; he endeavored to speak, but the words died on his lips.

"My friend," said Beauchamp, in the most affectionate tone, "I should gladly make an apology; but, alas! ——"

"But what?"

"The paragraph was correct, my friend."

"What! that French officer ——"

"Yes."

"Fernand?"

"Yes."

"The traitor who surrendered the castle of the man in whose service he was ——"

"Pardon me, my friend, that man was your father!"

Albert advanced furiously towards Beauchamp; but the

latter restrained him more by a mild look than by his extended hand.

"My friend," said he, "here is proof of it."

Albert opened the paper; it was an attestation of four notable inhabitants of Yanina, proving that Colonel Fernand Mondego, in the service of Ali Tebelen, had surrendered the castle for two million crowns. The signatures were perfectly legal. Albert tottered and fell overpowered in a chair. It could no longer be doubted: the family name was fully given. After a moment's mournful silence, his heart overflowed, and he gave way to a flood of tears.

Beauchamp, who had watched with sincere pity the young man's paroxysm of grief, approached him.

"Now, Albert," said he, "you understand me, do you not? I wished to see all, and to judge of everything for myself, hoping the explanation would be in your father's favor, and that I might do him justice. But, on the contrary, the particulars which are given prove that Fernand Mondego, raised by Ali Pacha to the rank of governor-general, is no other than Count Fernand de Morcerf; then recollecting the honor you had done me in admitting me to your friendship, I hastened to you."

Albert, still extended on the chair, covered his face with both hands, as if to prevent the light from reaching him.

"I hastened to you," continued Beauchamp, "to tell you, Albert, in this changing age, the faults of a father cannot revert upon his children. Few have passed through the revolutionary period, in the midst of which we were born, without some stain of infamy or blood to soil the uniform of the soldier, the gown of the statesman. Now that I have these proofs, Albert, and am in your confidence, no human power can force me to a duel which your own conscience would reproach you with as criminal, but I come to offer you what you can no longer demand of me. Do you wish these proofs, these at-

testations, which I alone possess, to be destroyed? Do you wish this frightful secret to remain with us? Confided to me, it shall never escape my lips; say, Albert, my friend, do you wish it?"

Albert threw himself on Beauchamp's neck.

"Ah! noble fellow!" cried he.

"Take these," said Beauchamp, presenting the papers to Albert.

Albert seized them with a convulsive hand, tore them in pieces; and, trembling lest the least vestige should escape, and one day appear to confront him, he approached the wax-light, always kept burning for cigars, and consumed every fragment.

"Dear, excellent friend!" murmured Albert, still burning the papers.

"Let all be forgotten as a sorrowful dream," said Beauchamp; "let it vanish as the last sparks from the blackened paper, and disappear as the smoke from those silent ashes."

"Yes, yes," said Albert, "and may there remain only the eternal friendship which I promise to my deliverer, which shall be transmitted to our children's children, and shall always remind me that I owe my life and the honor of my name to you; for had this been known, oh! Beauchamp, I should have destroyed myself; or,—no, my poor mother! I could not have killed her by the same blow—I should have fled from my country."

"Dear Albert!" said Beauchamp.

But this sudden and factitious joy soon forsook the young man, and was succeeded by a still greater grief.

"Well," said Beauchamp, "what still oppresses you, my friend?"

"I am broken-hearted," said Albert. "Listen, Beauchamp. I cannot thus, in a moment, relinquish the respect, the confidence, and pride with which a father's untarnished name inspires a son. Oh! Beauchamp, Beauchamp! how shall I now approach mine! Shall I draw



back my forehead from his embrace, or withhold my hand from his? I am the most wretched of men. Ah! my mother, my poor mother!" said Albert, gazing through his tears at his mother's portrait; "if you know this, how much must you suffer!"

"Come," said Beauchamp, taking both his hands, "take courage, my friend."

"But how came that first note inserted in your journal? Some unknown enemy — an invisible foe — has done this."

"The more must you fortify yourself, Albert. Let no trace of emotion be visible on your countenance; bear your grief as the cloud bears within it ruin and death — a fatal secret, known only when the storm bursts. Go, my friend, reserve your strength for the moment when the crash shall come."

"You think, then, all is not over yet?" said Albert, horror-stricken.

"I think nothing, my friend; but all things are possible. *Apropos* —"

"What?" said Albert, seeing Beauchamp hesitated.

"Are you going to marry Mademoiselle Danglars?"

"Why do you ask me now?"

"Because the rupture or fulfilment of this engagement is connected with the person of whom we were speaking."

"How?" said Albert, whose brow reddened, "you think that M. Danglars —"

"I ask you only how your engagement stands? Pray put no construction on my words I do not mean they should convey, and give them no undue weight."

"No," said Albert, "the engagement is broken off."

"Well!" said Beauchamp. Then, seeing the young man was about to relapse into melancholy, "Let us go out, Albert," said he, "a ride in the wood in the phaeton, or on horseback, will refresh you; we will then return to breakfast, and you shall attend to your affairs and not mine."

“Willingly,” said Albert; “but let us walk; I think a little exertion would do me good.”

The two friends walked out on the fortress. When arrived at La Madeleine:

“Since we are out,” said Beauchamp, “let us call on M. de Monte-Cristo; he is admirably adapted to revive one’s spirits, because he never interrogates; and, in my opinion, those who ask no questions are the best comforters.”

“Gladly,” said Albert; “I love him — let us call.”

## CHAPTER LXXXV.

## THE JOURNEY.

MONTE-CRISTO uttered a joyful exclamation on seeing the young people together.

"Ah! ah!" said he, "I hope all is over, explained, and settled."

"Yes," said Beauchamp; "the absurd reports have died away, and should they be renewed, I would be the first to oppose them; so let us speak no more of it."

"Albert will tell you," replied the count, "that I gave him the same advice. Look," added he, "I am finishing the most execrable morning's work."

"What is it?" said Albert, "arranging your papers apparently."

"My papers? thank God, no! my papers are all in capital order because I have none; but M. Cavalcanti's."

"M. Cavalcanti's?" asked Beauchamp.

"Yes; do you not know that this is a young man whom the count is introducing?" said Morcerf.

"Let us not misunderstand each other," replied Monte-Cristo; "I introduce no one, and certainly not M. Cavalcanti."

"And who," said Albert, with a forced smile, "is to marry Mademoiselle Danglars instead of me, which grieves me cruelly."

"What! Cavalcanti is going to marry Mademoiselle Danglars?" asked Beauchamp.

"Certainly! do you come from the end of the world?" said Monte-Cristo; "you a journalist, the husband of renown! it is the talk of all Paris."

"And you, count, have made this match?" asked Beauchamp.

"I? Silence, Monsieur le nouvelliste, do not spread that report. I make a match! No: you do not know me; I have done all in my power to oppose it."

"Ah! I understand," said Beauchamp; "on our friend Albert's account."

"On my account?" said the young man; "oh, no indeed! the count will do me the justice to assert that I have, on the contrary, always entreated him to break off my engagement, and happily it is ended. The count pretends I have not him to thank; but I perfectly well know to whom I am indebted."

"Listen," said Monte-Cristo; "I have had little to do with it, for I am at variance both with the father-in-law and the young man; there is only Mademoiselle Eugenie, who appears but little charmed with the thoughts of matrimony, and who, seeing how little I was disposed to persuade her to renounce her dear liberty, retains any affection for me."

"And do you say this wedding is at hand?"

"Oh, yes, in spite of all I could say. I do not know the young man—he is said to be of good family and rich; but I never trust to vague assertions. I have warned M. Danglars of it till I am tired, but he is fascinated with his Lucquois. I have even informed him of a circumstance I consider very serious; the young man was either changed by his nurse, stolen by gypsies, or lost by his tutor, I scarcely know which. But I do know his father lost sight of him for more than ten years; what he did during these ten years, God only knows. Well, all that was useless. They have commissioned me to write to the major to demand papers; and here they are. I send them, but will have nothing more to do with the matter."

"And what does Mademoiselle d'Armilly say to you for robbing her of her pupil?"

"Forsooth! I know not: but I understand she is going

to Italy. Madame Danglars asked me for letters of recommendation for the impressari; I gave her a few lines for the director of the Valle Theatre, who is under some obligation to me. But what is the matter, Albert? you look dull; are you, after all, unconsciously in love with Mademoiselle Eugenie?"

"I am not aware of it," said Albert, smiling sorrowfully.

Beauchamp turned to look at some paintings.

"But," continued Monte-Cristo, "you are not in your usual spirits?"

"I have a dreadful headache," said Albert.

"Well! my dear viscount," said Monte-Cristo, "I have an infallible remedy to propose to you."

"What is that?" asked the young man.

"A change."

"Indeed!" said Albert.

"Yes; and as I am just now excessively annoyed, I shall go from home. Shall we go together?"

"You annoyed, count?" said Beauchamp; "and by what?"

"*Pardieu!* you think very lightly of it; I should like to see you with a breviate preparing in your house."

"What breviate?"

"The one M. de Villefort is preparing against my amiable assassin — some brigand escaped from the galleys, apparently."

"True," said Beauchamp; "I saw it in the paper. Who is this Caderousse?"

"Some provincial, it appears. M. de Villefort heard of him at Marseilles, and M. Danglars recollects having seen him. Consequently M. le procureur is very active in the affair, and the prefect of police very much interested; and, thanks to that interest, for which I am very grateful, they send me all the robbers of Paris and the neighborhood, under pretence of their being Caderousse's murderers, so that in three months, if this continue,

every robber and assassin in France will have the plan of my house at his fingers' ends. I am resolved to desert them and to go to some remote corner of the earth, and shall be happy if you will accompany me, viscount."

"Willingly."

"Then it is settled?"

"Yes, but where?"

"I have told you, where the air is pure, where every sound soothes, where one is sure to be humbled, however proud may be his nature. I love that humiliation, I, who am master of the universe, as was Augustus."

"But where are you really going?"

"To sea, viscount; you know I am a sailor. I was rocked when an infant in the arms of old Ocean, and on the bosom of the beautiful Amphitrite; I have sported with the green mantle of the one and the azure robe of the other; I love the sea as a mistress, and pine if I do not often see her."

"Let us go, count."

"To sea?"

"Yes."

"You accept my proposal?"

"I do."

"Well, viscount, there will be in my courtyard this evening a good travelling britzska, with four post-horses, in which one may rest as in bed; M. Beauchamp, it holds four very well, will you accompany us?"

"Thank you, I have just returned from sea."

"What! you have been to sea?"

"Yes, I have just made a little excursion to the Borromees Islands."

"What of that? come with us," said Albert.

"No, dear Morcerf, you know I only refuse when the thing is impossible. Besides, it is important," added he in a low tone, "that I should remain in Paris just now to watch the paper."

"Ah, you are a good and an excellent friend," said

Albert; "yes, you are right; watch, watch, Beauchamp, and try to discover the enemy who made this disclosure."

Albert and Beauchamp parted; the last pressure of their hands expressed what their tongues could not before a stranger.

"Beauchamp is a worthy fellow," said Monte-Cristo, when the journalist was gone; "is he not, Albert?"

"Yes, and a sincere friend; I love him devotedly. But now we are alone, although it is immaterial to me, where are we going?"

"Into Normandy, if you like."

"Delightful; shall we be quite retired? have no society, no neighbors?"

"Our companions will be riding-horses, dogs to hunt with, and a fishing-boat."

"Exactly what I wish for; I will apprise my mother of my intention, and return to you."

"But shall you be allowed to go into Normandy?"

"I may go where I please."

"Yes, I am aware you may go alone, since I once met you in Italy — but to accompany the mysterious Monte-Cristo?"

"You forget, count, that I have often told you of the deep interest my mother takes in you."

"'Woman is fickle,' said Francis I.; 'Woman is like a wave of the sea,' said Shakespeare; this great king and this great poet ought to have known woman's nature well."

"My mother is not such a woman; careful in forming her opinion, she changes it not."

"Yes, truly," said Monte-Cristo, with a sigh; "and do you think she is in the least interested in me?"

"I repeat it, you must really be a very strange and superior man, for my mother is so absorbed by the interest you have excited that when I am with her she speaks of no one else."

"And does she try to make you dislike me?"

"On the contrary, she often says, 'Morcerf, I believe the count to be a noble fellow: try to gain his esteem.'"

"Indeed!" said Monte-Cristo, sighing.

"You see, then," said Albert, "that, instead of opposing, she will encourage me."

"Adieu, then, until five o'clock; be punctual, and we shall arrive at twelve or one."

"At Treport?"

"Yes; or in the neighborhood."

"But can we travel forty-eight leagues in eight hours?"

"Easily," said Monte-Cristo.

"You are certainly a prodigy; you will soon not only surpass the railway, which would not be very difficult in France, but even the telegraph."

"Meanwhile, viscount, since we cannot perform the journey in less than seven or eight hours, do not keep me waiting."

"Do not fear, I have little to prepare."

Monte-Cristo smiled as he nodded to Albert, then remained a moment absorbed in deep meditation. But passing his hand across his forehead, as if to dispel his reverie, he rang the bell twice, and Bertuccio entered.

"Bertuccio," said he, "I intend going this evening to Normandy, instead of to-morrow or the next day; you will have sufficient time before five o'clock; dispatch a messenger to apprise the grooms at the first station. M. de Morcerf will accompany me."

Bertuccio obeyed, dispatched a courier to Pontoise to say the travelling-carriage would arrive at six o'clock. From Pontoise another express was sent to the next stage, and in six hours all the horses stationed on the road were ready. Before his departure, the count went to Haydee's apartments, told her of his intention, and resigned everything to her care.

Albert was punctual. The journey soon became inter-



esting from its rapidity, of which Morcerf had formed no previous idea.

"Truly," said Monte-Cristo, "with your post-horses going at the rate of two leagues an hour, and that absurd law that one traveller shall not pass another without permission, so that an invalid or ill-tempered traveller may detain those who are well and active, it is impossible to move; I escape this annoyance by travelling with my own postilion and horses, do I not, Ali?"

The count put his head out of the window and whistled, and the horses appeared to fly. The carriage rolled with a thundering noise over the pavement, and every one turned to notice the dazzling meteor. Ali, smiling, repeated the sound, grasped the reins with a firm hand, and spurred his horses, whose beautiful manes floated in the breeze. This child of the desert was in his element; and with his black face and sparkling eyes, appeared in the cloud of dust he raised like the genius of the simoon and the god of the hurricane.

"I never knew till now the delight of speed," said Morcerf, and the last cloud disappeared from his brow; "but where the devil do you get such horses? are they made to order?"

"Precisely," said the count; "six years since I bought a horse in Hungary remarkable for its swiftness. The thirty-two that we shall use to-night are its progeny; they are all entirely black, with the exception of a star upon the forehead."

"That is perfectly admirable; but what do you do, count, with all these horses?"

"You see, I travel with them."

"But you are not always travelling."

"When I no longer require them, Bertuccio will sell them; and he expects to realize thirty or forty thousand francs by the sale."

"But no monarch in Europe will be wealthy enough to purchase them."

"Then he will sell them to some Eastern vizier, who will empty his coffers to purchase them, and refill them by applying the bastinado to his subjects."

"Count, may I suggest one idea to you?"

"Certainly."

"It is that next to you Bertuccio must be the richest gentleman in Europe."

"You are mistaken, viscount; I believe he has not a franc in his possession."

"Then he must be a wonder. My dear count, if you tell me many more marvellous things, I warn you I shall not believe them."

"I countenance nothing that is marvellous, M. Albert; tell me, why does a steward rob his master?"

"Because, I suppose, it is his nature to do so, for the love of robbing."

"You are mistaken; it is because he has a wife and family, and ambitious desires for himself and them. Also because he is not sure of always retaining his situation, and wishes to provide for the future. Now, M. Bertuccio is alone in the world, he uses my property without accounting for the use he makes of it; he is sure never to leave my service."

"Why?"

"Because I should never get a better."

"Probabilities are deceptive."

"But I deal in certainties: he is the best servant over whom you have the power of life and death."

"Do you possess that right over Bertuccio?"

"Yes."

There are words which close a conversation as if with an iron door: such was the count's "yes." The whole journey was performed with equal rapidity; the thirty-two horses, dispersed at seven stages, arrived in eight hours. At midnight they arrived at the gate of a beautiful park. The porter was in attendance; he had been apprised by the groom of the last stage of the count's approach. At half-

past two in the morning Morcerf was conducted to his apartments, where a bath and supper were prepared. The servant who had travelled at the back of the carriage waited on him; Baptistin, who rode in front, attended the count.

Albert bathed, took his supper, and went to bed. All night he was lulled by the melancholy noise of the swell of the sea. On rising, he went to his window, which opened on a terrace, having the sea in front, and at the back a pretty park bounded by a small forest. In a creek lay a little yacht with a narrow hull and tall masts, bearing on its flag the Monte-Cristo arms, which were a mountain or, on a sea azure, with a cross gules on the shield. Around the schooner lay a number of small fishing-boats belonging to the fishermen of the neighboring village, as humble subjects awaiting orders from their queen. There, as in every spot where Monte-Cristo stopped, if but for two days, all was comfort: life became easy.

Albert found in his anteroom two guns, with all the accoutrements of hunting; a higher room, on the ground floor, containing all the ingenious instruments the English have invented for fishing. The day passed in pursuing those exercises, in which Monte-Cristo excelled; they killed a dozen pheasants in the park, as many trout in the stream, dined in a turret overlooking the ocean, and took tea in the library.

Towards the evening of the third day, Albert, completely tired with the exercise, which appeared sport to Monte-Cristo, was sleeping in an armchair near the window, while the count was designing with his architect the plan of a conservatory in his house, when the sound of a horse at full speed on the highroad made Albert look up. He was disagreeably surprised to see his own valet de chambre, whom he had not brought, that he might not inconvenience Monte-Cristo.

"Florentin, here!" cried he, starting up; "is my mother ill?" And he hastened to the door.

Monte-Cristo watched him; he saw him approach the valet, who drew a small sealed parcel from his pocket, containing a newspaper and a letter.

"From whom is this?" said he, eagerly.

"From M. Beauchamp," replied Florentin.

"Did he send you?"

"Yes, sir; he sent for me to his house, gave me money for my journey, procured a horse, and made me promise not to stop till I had rejoined you; I have come in fifteen hours."

Albert opened the letter with fear, uttered a shriek on reading the first line, and seized the paper. His sight was dimmed, his legs sank under him, and he would have fallen had not Florentin supported him.

"Poor young man!" said Monte-Cristo, with a low voice; "it is then true that the sin of the father shall fall on the children to the third and fourth generation."

Meanwhile Albert had revived, and continuing to read, he threw back his head, saying:

"Florentin, is your horse fit to return immediately?"

"It is a poor lame post-horse."

"In what state was the house when you left?"

"All was quiet; but on returning from M. Beauchamp's, I found madame in tears; she had sent for me to know when you would return. I told her my orders from M. Beauchamp; she first extended her arms to prevent me, but after a moment's reflection, 'Go,' said she, 'Florentin, and fetch him.'"

"Yes, my mother," said Albert, "I will return, and woe to the infamous wretch! But first I must go——"

He returned completely changed to the room where he had left Monte-Cristo; he had gone out as usual, but returned with a trembling voice, a feverish look, a threatening eye, and a tottering step.

"Count," said he, "I thank you for your hospitality, which I would gladly have enjoyed longer; but I must return to Paris."

"What has happened?"

"A great misfortune, more important to me than life. Question me not, I pray you, but lend me a horse."

"My stables are at your command, viscount; but you will kill yourself by riding on horseback; take a post-chaise or a carriage."

"No, it would delay me, and I require that fatigue you fear: it will do me good."

Albert reeled, as if shot with a cannon-ball, and fell on a chair near the door. Monte-Cristo saw not this second weakness; he was at the window calling:

"Ali, a horse for M. Morcerf! quick, he is in a hurry!"

These words restored Albert; he darted from the room, followed by the count.

"Thank you!" cried he, throwing himself on his horse. "Return as soon as you can, Florentin. Must I use any password to procure a horse?"

"Only dismount, another will be immediately saddled."

Albert hesitated a moment.

"You may think my departure strange and foolish," said the young man; "you know not how a paragraph in a newspaper may exasperate. Read that," said he, "when I am gone, that you may not be witness of my anger."

While the count picked up the paper, Albert put spurs to his horse, and started with the rapidity of an arrow. The count watched him with a feeling of compassion, and when he had completely disappeared, read as follows:

"The French officer in the service of Ali, Pacha of Yanina, alluded to three weeks since in the 'Impartial,' who not only surrendered the castle of Yanina but sold his benefactor to the Turks, styled himself truly at that time Fernand, as our honorable brother states; but he has since added to his Christian name a title of nobility and a family name. He now calls himself the Count of Morcerf, and ranks among the peers."

Thus this terrible secret, which Beauchamp had so generously destroyed, appeared again as an armed phantom; and another paper, cruelly informed, had published, two days after Albert's departure for Normandy, the few lines which had almost distracted the unfortunate young man.

## CHAPTER LXXXVI.

## THE TRIAL.

AT eight o'clock in the morning Albert had arrived at Beauchamp's door. The valet de chambre had received orders to introduce him into his master's room, who was just then bathing.

"Here I am," said Albert.

"Well, my poor friend," said Beauchamp, "I expected you."

"I need not say, I think you too faithful and too kind to have spoken of that painful circumstance. Your having sent for me is another proof of your affection. So, without losing time, tell me, have you the slightest idea whence this terrible blow proceeds?"

"I think I have some clew."

"But first tell me all the particulars of this shameful plot."

Beauchamp proceeded to relate to the young man, overwhelmed with shame and grief, the following facts: Two days previously, the article had appeared in another paper beside the "Impartial," and, what was more serious, one that was well known as a government paper. Beauchamp was breakfasting when he read the passage; he sent immediately for a cabriolet, and hastened to the publisher's office.

Although professing diametrically opposite principles from those of the editor of the accusing paper, Beauchamp, as it sometimes, we may say often, happens, was his intimate friend. The editor was reading, with apparent

delight, a leading article in the same paper on beet-root sugar, probably a composition of his own.

"Ah! *pardieu!*" said Beauchamp, "with the paper in your hand, my friend, I need not tell you the cause of my visit."

"Are you, perchance, concerned in the sugar question?" asked the editor of the ministerial paper.

"No," replied Beauchamp, "I have not considered the question; a totally different subject interests me."

"What is it?"

"The article relative to Morcerf."

"Indeed! Is it not a curious affair?"

"So curious, that I think you are running a great risk of a prosecution for defamation of character."

"Not at all; we have received with the information all the requisite proofs, and we are quite sure M. de Morcerf will not raise his voice against us; besides, it is rendering a service to one's country to denounce those wretched criminals who are unworthy of the honor it bestows on them."

Beauchamp remained thunderstruck.

"Who, then, has so correctly informed you?" asked he; "for my paper, which had announced the subject, has been obliged to stop for want of proof; and yet we are more interested than you in exposing M. de Morcerf, as he is a peer of France, and we are of the opposition."

"Oh! that is very simple; we have not sought to scandalize; this news was brought to us. A man arrived yesterday from Yanina, bringing the formidable bundle; and as we hesitated to publish the accusatory article, he told us it should be inserted in some other paper."

Beauchamp understood that nothing remained but to submit, and left the office to dispatch a courier to Morcerf. But he had been unable to send to Albert the following particulars, as the events had transpired after the messenger's departure, namely, that the same day a great agitation was manifest in the House of Peers among the usually calm groups of the noble assembly. Every one



had arrived almost before the usual hour, and was conversing on the melancholy event which was to attract the attention of the public towards one of their most illustrious members.

Some were perusing the article, others making comments and recalling circumstances which substantiated the charges still more. The count was no favorite with his colleagues. Like all upstarts, he had had recourse to a great deal of haughtiness to maintain his position. The true nobility laughed at him, the talented repelled him, and the honorable instinctively despised him. Such were the extremities to which the count was driven; the finger of God once pointed at him, every one was prepared to raise the hue and cry after him.

The Count de Morcerf alone was ignorant of the news. He did not take the paper containing the defamatory article, and had passed the morning in writing letters and trying a horse. He arrived at his usual hour, with a proud look and insolent demeanor; he alighted, passed through the corridors, and entered the house without observing the hesitation of the doorkeepers or the coolness of his colleagues. Business had already commenced half an hour when he entered.

Every one held the accusing paper; but, as usual, no one liked to take upon himself the responsibility of the attack. At length an honorable peer, Morcerf's acknowledged enemy, ascended the tribune with that solemnity which announced the expected moment had arrived.

There was an imposing silence; Morcerf alone knew not why such profound attention was given to an orator who was not always listened to with so much complacency. The count did not notice the introduction, in which the speaker announced that his communication would be of that vital importance that it demanded the undivided attention of the house; but at the names Yanina and Colonel Fernand, he turned so awfully pale, that every member shuddered and fixed his eyes upon him. Moral wounds

have this peculiarity: they conceal themselves, but never close; always painful, always ready to bleed when touched, they remain fresh and open in the heart.

The article having been read during this painful silence, was only then disturbed by a universal shudder, and immediately restored when the orator resumed. He stated his scruples and the difficulties of the case. It was the honor of M. de Morcerf and that of the whole house he proposed to defend, by provoking a debate on those personal questions always so warmly agitated. He concluded by calling for an examination, which might confound the calumnious report before it had time to spread, and to restore M. de Morcerf to the position he had long held in public opinion.

Morcerf was so completely overwhelmed by this terrible calamity that he could scarcely stammer a few words as he looked around on the assembly. This timidity, which might proceed from the astonishment of innocence as well as the shame of guilt, conciliated some in his favor; for men who are truly generous are always ready to compassionate when the misfortune of their enemy surpasses the limits of their hatred.

The president put it to the vote, and it was decided the examination should take place. The count was asked what time he required to prepare his defence. Morcerf's courage had revived when he found himself alive after this horrible blow.

"My lords," answered he, "it is not by time I could repel the attack made on me by enemies unknown to me, and doubtless hidden in obscurity; it is immediately, and by a thunderbolt, I must repel the flash of lightning which for a moment startled me. Oh! that I could, instead of taking up this defence, shed my last drop of blood to prove to my noble colleagues that I am their equal in worth."

These words made a favorable impression on behalf of the accused.

"I demand, then, that the examination shall take place as soon as possible, and I will furnish the house with all necessary information."

"What day do you fix?" asked the president.

"To-day I am at your service," replied the count.

The president rang the bell.

"Does the house approve that the examination should take place to-day?"

"Yes!" was the unanimous answer.

A committee of twelve members was chosen to examine the proofs brought forward by Morcerf. The examination would commence at eight o'clock that evening in the committee-room, and if it were necessary to postpone it, it would be resumed each evening at the same hour. Morcerf asked leave to retire; he had to collect the documents he had long been preparing against this storm, which his sagacity had foreseen.

Albert listened, trembling now with hope, then with anger, and then again with shame; for, from Beauchamp's confidence, he knew his father was guilty; and he asked himself how, since he was guilty, he could prove his innocence.

Beauchamp hesitated to continue his narrative.

"What next?" asked Albert.

"What next? My friend, you impose a painful task on me. Must you know all?"

"Absolutely; and rather from your lips than another's."

"Prepare your courage, then; for never will you have required it more."

Albert passed his hand over his forehead, as if to try his strength, as a man who is preparing to defend his life proves his shield and bends his sword. He thought himself strong enough, for he mistook fever for energy.

"Proceed," said he.

"The evening arrived: all Paris was in expectation. Many said your father had only to show himself to confound the charge; many others said he would not appear;

while some asserted they had seen him start for Brussels, and others went to the police-office to inquire if he had taken out a passport.

"I used all my influence with one of the committee, a young peer of my acquaintance, to get introduced into a sort of gallery. He called for me at seven o'clock, and before any one had arrived, asked one of the doorkeepers to place me in a box. I was concealed by a column, and might witness the whole of the terrible scene which was about to take place.

"At eight o'clock all were in their places, and M. de Morcerf entered at the last stroke. He held some papers in his hand; his countenance was calm and step firm, his dress particularly nice, and, according to the ancient military costume, buttoned completely up to the chin.

"His presence produced a good effect. His committee was composed of liberal men, several of whom came forward to shake hands with him."

Albert felt his heart bursting at these particulars, but gratitude mingled with his sorrow: he would gladly have embraced those who had given his father this proof of esteem at a moment when his honor was so powerfully attacked.

"At this moment one of the doorkeepers brought in a letter for the president.

"'You are at liberty to speak, M. de Morcerf,' said the president, as he unsealed the letter; and the count began his defence, I assure you, Albert, in a most eloquent and skilful manner. He produced documents proving that the Vizier of Yanina had to the last moment honored him with his entire confidence, since he had entrusted him with a negotiation of life and death with the emperor. He produced the ring, his mark of authority, with which Ali Pacha generally sealed his letters, and which the latter had given him that he might, on his return at any hour day or night, or even in his harem, gain access to him. Unfortunately, the negotiation failed, and when he re-

turned to defend his benefactor, he was dead. 'But,' said the count, 'so great was Ali Pacha's confidence, that, on his deathbed, he resigned his favorite mistress and her daughter to my care.'"

Albert started on hearing these words: the history of Haydee recurred to him, and he remembered what she had said of that message and the ring, and of the manner in which she had been sold and made a slave.

"And what effect did this discourse produce?" anxiously inquired Albert.

"I acknowledge it affected me, and, indeed, all the committee, also," said Beauchamp.

"Meanwhile, the president carelessly opened the letter which had been brought to him; the first lines aroused his attention; he read them again and again, and fixing his eyes on M. de Morcerf:

"'M. le comte,' said he, 'you have said the Vizier of Yanina had confided his wife and daughter to your care?'

"'Yes, sir,' replied Morcerf, 'but, in that, like all the rest, misfortune pursued me; on my return, Vasiliki and her daughter Haydee had disappeared.'

"'Did you know them?'

"'My intimacy with the pacha and his unlimited confidence had gained me an introduction to them, and I had seen them above twenty times.'

"'Have you any idea what is become of them?'

"'Yes, sir, I heard that they had fallen victims to their sorrow, and perhaps to their poverty. I was not rich; my life was in constant danger; I could not seek them, to my great regret.'

"The president frowned imperceptibly.

"'Gentlemen,' said he, 'you have heard M. le Comte de Morcerf's defence. Can you, M. le comte, produce any witnesses to the truth of what you have asserted?'

"'Alas! no, sir,' replied the count; 'all those who surrounded the vizier, or who knew me at his court, are either dead or scattered; alone, I believe, of all my countrymen,

I survive that dreadful war. I have only the letters of Ali Tebelen, which I have placed before you; the ring, a token of his good-will, which is here; and lastly, the most convincing proof I can offer, namely, after an anonymous attack, the absence of all witnesses against my veracity and the purity of my military life.'

"A murmur of approbation ran through the assembly; and at this moment, Albert, had nothing transpired, your father's cause had been gained. It only remained to put it to the vote, when the president resumed:

"Gentlemen, and you, M. le comte, you will not be displeased, I presume, to listen to one who calls himself a very important witness, and who has just presented himself. He is doubtless come to prove the perfect innocence of our colleague. Here is a letter I have just received on the subject; shall it be read or shall it be passed over? and shall we not regard this incident?'

"M. de Morcerf turned pale, and clinched his hands on the papers he held.

"The committee decided to hear the letter; the count was thoughtful and silent. The president read:

"M. le President:—I can furnish the committee of inquiry into the conduct of the Lieutenant-General Count de Morcerf in Epirus and in Macedonia with important particulars.'

"The president paused, and the count turned pale. The president looked at his auditors.

"Proceed,' was heard on all sides. The president resumed:

"I was on the spot at the death of Ali Pacha; I was present during his last moments; I know what has become of Vasiliki and Haydee. I am at the command of the committee and even claim the honor of being heard. I shall be in the lobby when this note is delivered to you.'

“‘And who is this witness, or rather this enemy?’ asked the count, in a tone in which there was a visible alteration.

“‘We will know, sir,’ replied the president. ‘Is the committee willing to hear this witness?’

“‘Yes, yes,’ said they, all at once.

“The doorkeeper was called.

“‘Is there any one in the lobby?’ said the president.

“‘Yes, sir.’

“‘Who is it?’

“‘A female, accompanied by a servant.’

“Every one looked at his neighbor.

“‘Introduce the female,’ said the president.

“Five minutes after, the doorkeeper again appeared; all eyes were fixed on the door, and I (said Beauchamp) shared the general expectation and anxiety. Behind the doorkeeper walked a female enveloped in a large veil, which completely concealed her. It was evident, from her figure and the perfume she had about her, that this was a young and elegant woman, but that was all. The president requested her to throw aside her veil, and it was then seen she was dressed in the Grecian costume, and was remarkably beautiful.”

“Ah!” said Albert, “it was she.”

“Who?”

“Haydee.”

“Who told you that?”

“Alas! I guessed it. But go on, Beauchamp. You see I am calm and strong. And yet we must be drawing near the disclosure.”

“M. de Morcerf,” continued Beauchamp, “looked at this female with surprise and terror. Her lips were about to pass his sentence of life or death. To all the committee the adventure was so extraordinary and curious, that the interest they had felt for the count’s safety became now quite a secondary matter. The president himself advanced to place a seat for the young lady; but she declined avail-

ing herself of it. As for the count, he had fallen on his chair; it was evident his legs refused to support him.

“‘Madame,’ said the president, ‘you have engaged to furnish the committee with some important particulars respecting the affair at Yanina, and you have stated that you were an eye-witness of the events.’

“‘I was, indeed!’ said the stranger, with a tone of sweet melancholy, and with the sonorous voice peculiar to the East.

“‘But allow me to say, you must have been very young then.’

“‘I was four years old; but as those events deeply concerned me, not a single particular has escaped my memory.’

“‘In what manner could these events concern you, and who are you, that they should have made so deep an impression on you?’

“‘On them depended my father’s life,’ replied she. ‘I am Haydee, the daughter of Ali Tebelen, Pacha of Yanina, and of Vasiliki, his beloved wife.’

“The blush of mingled pride and modesty which suddenly suffused the cheeks of the young female, the brilliancy of her eye, and her highly important communication, produced an inexpressible effect on the assembly. As for the count, he could not have been more overwhelmed if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet and opened before him an immense gulf.

“‘Madame,’ replied the president, bowing with profound respect, ‘allow me to ask one question—it shall be the last: Can you prove the authenticity of what you have now stated?’

“‘I can sir,’ said Haydee, drawing from under her veil a satin satchel highly perfumed: ‘for here is the register of my birth, signed by my father and his principal officers; and that of my baptism, my father having consented to my being brought up in my mother’s faith; this latter has been sealed by the Grand Primate of Macedonia and Epirus; and lastly (and perhaps the most important), the record of the sale of my person and that of my mother to



the Armenian merchant, El-Kobbir, by the French officer, who, in his infamous bargain with the Porte, had reserved as his part of the booty the wife and daughter of his benefactor, whom he sold for the sum of four hundred thousand francs.'

"A greenish paleness spread over the count's cheeks, and his eyes became bloodshot at these terrible imputations, which were listened to by the assembly with an ill-foreboding silence.

"Haydee, still calm, but whose calmness was more dreadful than the anger of another would have been, handed to the president the record of her sale, registered in Arabic. It had been supposed some of these papers might be registered in the Arabian, Romaic, or Turkish language, and the interpreter of the house was in attendance. One of the noble peers, who was familiar with the Arabian language, having studied it during the sublime Egyptian campaign, followed with his eyes as the translator read aloud:

"'I, El-Kobbir, a slave merchant, and furnisher of the harem of his highness, acknowledge having received for transmission to the sublime emperor, from the French lord, Count of Monte-Cristo, an emerald valued at eight hundred thousand francs, as the ransom of a young Christian slave of eleven years of age, named Haydee, the acknowledged daughter of the late lord Ali Tebelen, Pacha of Yanina, and of Vasiliki, his favorite; she having been sold to me seven years previously, with her mother, who had died on arriving at Constantinople, by a French colonel in the service of the Vizier Ali Tebelen, named Fernand Mondego. The above-mentioned purchase was made on his highness's account, whose mandate I had, for the sum of four hundred thousand francs.

"'Given at Constantinople by authority of his highness, in the year 1247 of the Hegira.

"'EL-KOBBIR.

“‘That this record should have all due authority, it shall bear the imperial seal, which the vender is bound to have affixed to it.’

“Near the merchant’s signature there was, indeed, the seal of the Sublime Emperor.

“A dreadful silence succeeded the reading of this paper; the count could only look, and his gaze, fixed as if unconsciously on Haydee, seemed one of fire and blood.

“‘Madame,’ said the president, ‘may reference be made to the Count of Monte-Cristo, who is now, I believe, in Paris?’

“‘Sir,’ replied Haydee, ‘the Count of Monte-Cristo, my other father, has been in Normandy the last three days.’

“‘Who, then, has counselled you to take this step, one for which the court is deeply indebted to you, and which is perfectly natural, considering your birth and your misfortunes?’

“‘Sir,’ replied Haydee, ‘I have been led to take this step from a feeling of respect and grief. Although a Christian, may God forgive me! I have always sought to revenge my illustrious father. Since I set my foot in France, and knew the traitor lived in Paris, I have watched carefully. I live retired in the house of my noble protector, but I do it from choice; I love retirement and silence, because I can live with my thoughts and recollections of past days. But M. le Comte de Monte-Cristo surrounds me with every paternal care, and I am ignorant of nothing which passes in the world. I learn all in the silence of my apartments. For instance, I see all the newspapers, every periodical, as well as every new melody; and by thus watching the course of the life of others I learned what had transpired this morning in the House of Peers, and what was to take place this evening — then I wrote.’

“‘Then,’ remarked the president, ‘the Count of Monte-Cristo knows nothing of your present proceedings?’

“‘He is quite unaware of them, and I have but one fear, which is, that he should disapprove of what I have done; but it is a glorious day for me,’ continued the young girl, raising her ardent gaze to heaven, ‘that on which I find at last an opportunity of revenging my father.’

“The count had not uttered one word the whole of this time; his colleagues looked at him, and, doubtless, pitied his blighted prospects which sunk under the perfumed breath of a woman; his misery was depicted by sinister lines in his countenance.

“‘M. de Morcerf,’ said the president, ‘do you recognize this lady as the daughter of Ali Tebelen, Pacha of Yanina?’

“‘No,’ said Morcerf, attempting to rise; ‘it is a base plot, contrived by my enemies.’

“Haydee, whose eyes had been fixed upon the door, as if expecting some one, turned hastily, and seeing the count standing, shrieked:

“‘You do not know me?’ said she; ‘well, I fortunately recognize you! You are Fernand Mondego, the French officer who led the troops of my noble father. It is you who surrendered the castle of Yanina! It is you who, sent by him to Constantinople, to treat with the emperor for the life or death of your benefactor, brought back a false mandate granting full pardon! It is you who, with that mandate, obtained the pacha’s ring, which gave you authority over Selim, the fire-keeper! It is you who stabbed Selim! It is you who sold us, my mother and me, to the merchant, El-Kobbir! Assassin! assassin! assassin! you have still on your brow your master’s blood! Look, gentlemen, all!’

“These words had been pronounced with such enthusiasm and evident truth, that every eye was fixed on the count’s forehead, and he himself passed his hand across it, as if he felt Ali’s blood still moist upon it.

“‘You positively recognize M. de Morcerf as the officer, Fernand Mondego?’

“‘Indeed I do!’ cried Haydee. ‘Oh, my mother! it was you who told me, “You were free, you had a beloved father, you were destined to be almost a queen. Look well at that man; it is he who raised your father’s head on the point of a spear — it is he who sold us, it is he who forsook us! Look well at his right hand, on which he has a large wound; if you forgot his features, you would know him by that hand into which fell one by one the golden pieces of the merchant El-Kobbir!” I know him! Ah! let him say now if he does not recognize me!’

“Each word fell like a dagger on Morcerf, and deprived him of a portion of his energy; as she uttered the last, he hid hastily in his bosom his hand, which had indeed been mutilated by a wound, and fell back on his chair, overwhelmed by wretchedness and despair. This scene completely changed the opinion of the assembly respecting the accused count.

“‘M. le Comte de Morcerf,’ said the president, ‘do not allow yourself to be depressed; answer: the justice of the court is supreme and impartial as that of God; it will not suffer you to be trampled on by your enemies without giving you an opportunity of defending yourself. Shall further inquiries be made? Shall two members of the house be sent to Yanina? Speak!’

“Morcerf did not reply.

“Then all the members looked at each other with terror. They knew the count’s energetic and violent temper. It must be, indeed, a dreadful blow which should deprive him of courage to defend himself; they expected that this silence, resembling a sleep, would be followed by an awakening like a thunderbolt.

“‘Well!’ said the president, ‘what is your decision?’

“‘I have no reply to make,’ said the count, in a low tone.

“‘Has the daughter of Ali Tebelen spoken the truth?’ said the president. ‘Is she, then, the terrible witness to whose charge you dare not plead “Not guilty”? Have

you really committed the crimes of which you are accused ? ’

“The count looked around him with an expression which might have softened tigers, but which could not disarm his judges. Then he raised his eyes towards the ceiling, but withdrew them immediately, as if he feared the roof would open and reveal to his distressed view that second tribunal called heaven, and that other judge named God. Then, with a hasty movement, he tore open his coat, which seemed to stifle him, and flew from the room like a madman; his footstep was heard one moment in the corridor, then the rattling of his carriage wheels, as he was driven rapidly away.

“‘Gentlemen,’ said the president, when silence was restored, ‘is M. le Comte de Morcerf convicted of felony, treason, and outrage ? ’

“‘Yes,’ replied all the members of the committee of inquiry, with a unanimous voice.

“Haydee had remained until the close of the meeting. She heard the count’s sentence pronounced without betraying an expression of joy or pity; then drawing her veil over her face, she bowed majestically to the councillors, and left with that dignified step which Virgil attributes to his goddesses.”

## CHAPTER LXXXVII.

## THE CHALLENGE.

"THEN," continued Beauchamp, "I took advantage of the silence and the darkness to leave the house without being seen. The doorkeeper who had introduced me was waiting for me at the door, and conducted me through the corridors to a private entrance opening into la Rue de la Vaugirard. I left with mingled feelings of sorrow and delight. Excuse me, Albert, sorrow on your account, and delighted with that noble girl, thus pursuing paternal vengeance. Yes, Albert, from whatever source the blow may have proceeded, it may be from an enemy, but that enemy is only the agent of Providence."

Albert held his head between his hands; he raised his face, red with shame, and bathed in tears, and seizing Beauchamp's arm:

"My friend," said he, "my life is ended; I cannot calmly say with you, 'Providence has struck the blow,' but I must discover who pursues me with his hatred; and when I have found him I will kill him, or he will kill me. I rely on your friendship to assist me, Beauchamp, if contempt has not banished it from your heart."

"Contempt, my friend? how does this misfortune affect you? No, happily that unjust prejudice is forgotten which made the son responsible for the father's actions. Review your life, Albert; although it is only just beginning, did a lovely summer's day ever dawn with greater purity than has marked the commencement of your career? No, Albert, take my advice, you are young and rich; leave Paris — all is soon forgotten in the great Babylon of ex-

cited life and changing taste; you will return after three or four years with a Russian princess for a bride, and no one will think more of what occurred yesterday than if it had happened sixteen years ago."

"Thank you, my dear Beauchamp, thank you for the excellent feeling which prompts your advice, but it cannot be thus. I have told you my wish; or, if it must be so, I will say, determination. You understand that, interested as I am in this affair, I cannot see it in the same light as you do. What appears to you to emanate from a celestial source seems to me to proceed from one far less pure. Providence appears to me to have no share in this affair; and happily so, for instead of the invisible, impalpable agent of celestial rewards and punishments, I shall find one both palpable and visible, on whom I shall revenge myself, I assure you, for I have suffered during the last month. Now, I repeat, Beauchamp, I wish to return to human and material existence; and if you are still the friend you profess to be, help me to discover the hand that struck the blow."

"Be it so," said Beauchamp; "if you must have me descend to earth, I submit; and if you will seek your enemy, I will assist you; and I will engage to find him, my honor being almost as deeply interested as yours."

"Well, then, you understand, Beauchamp, that we begin our research immediately. Each moment's delay is an eternity for me. The calumniator is not yet punished, and he may hope he will not be; but on my honor, if he thinks so, he deceives himself."

"Well, listen, Morcerf."

"Ah! Beauchamp, I see you know something already; you will restore me to life."

"I do not say there is any truth in what I am going to tell you; but it is, at least, as a light in a dark night; by following it we may perhaps discover something more certain."

"Tell me; satisfy my impatience."

"Well, I will tell you what I did not like to mention on my return from Yanina."

"Say on."

"I went, of course, to the chief banker of the town to make inquiries. At the first word, before I had even mentioned your father's name:

"'Ah!' said he, 'I guess what brings you here.'

"'How and why?'

"'Because a fortnight since I was questioned on the same subject.'

"'By whom?'

"'By a banker of Paris, my correspondent.'

"'Whose name is ——'

"'Danglars.'

"He!" cried Albert; "yes, it is indeed he who has so long pursued my father with jealous hatred. He, the man who would be popular, cannot forgive the Count de Morcerf for being created a peer; and this marriage, broken off without a reason being assigned, — yes, it is all from the same cause."

"Inquire, Albert, but do not be angry without reason — inquire, and if it is true ——"

"Oh! yes, if it is true," cried the young man, "he shall pay me all I have suffered."

"Beware, Morcerf, he is already an old man."

"I will respect his age as he has respected the honor of my family; if my father had offended him, why did he not attack him, personally? Oh, no! he was afraid to encounter him face to face."

"I do not condemn you, Albert: I only restrain you. Act prudently."

"Oh! do not fear; besides, you will accompany me. Beauchamp, solemn transactions should be sanctioned by a witness. Before this day closes, if M. Danglars is guilty, he shall cease to live or I will die. *Pardieu!* Beauchamp, mine shall be a splendid funeral."

"When such resolutions are made, Albert, they should



be promptly executed. Do you wish to go to M. Danglars? Let us go immediately."

They sent for a cabriolet. On entering the banker's mansion, they perceived the phaeton and a servant of M. Andrea Cavalcanti.

"Ah! *parbleu*! that's good," said Albert, with a gloomy tone; "if M. Danglars will not fight with me, I will kill his son-in-law. Cavalcanti will certainly fight."

The servant announced the young man; but the banker, recollecting what had transpired the day before, did not wish him admitted. It was, however, too late; Albert had followed the footman, and hearing the order given, forced the door open, and, followed by Beauchamp, found himself in the banker's cabinet.

"Sir," cried the latter, "am I no longer to receive whom I choose in my house? You appear to forget yourself sadly."

"No, sir," said Albert, coldly; "there are circumstances in which one cannot, except through cowardice—I offer you that refuge—refuse to admit certain persons at least."

"What is your errand, then, with me, sir?"

"I mean," said Albert, approaching, without apparently noticing Cavalcanti, who stood with his back towards the fireplace, "I mean to propose a meeting in some retired corner where no one will interrupt us for ten minutes, that will be sufficient; where two men having met, one of them will remain on the ground."

Danglars turned pale; Cavalcanti moved a step forward, and Albert turned towards him.

"And you, too," said he, "come, if you like, M. le comte; you have a claim, being almost one of the family, and I will give as many rendezvous of that kind as I can find persons willing to accept them."

Cavalcanti looked at Danglars with a stupefied air; and the latter, making an effort, rose and advanced between the two young people. Albert's attack on Andrea had

placed him on a different footing, and he hoped this visit had another cause than that he had at first supposed.

"Indeed, sir," said he to Albert, "if you are come to quarrel with this gentleman, because I have preferred him to you, I shall resign the case to the procureur du roi."

"You mistake, sir," said Morcerf, with a gloomy smile; "I am not alluding in the least to matrimony, and I only address myself to M. Cavalcanti because he appeared disposed to interfere between us. In one respect you are right, for I am ready to quarrel with every one to-day; but you have the first claim, M. Danglars."

"Sir," replied Danglars, pale with anger and fear, "I warn you, when I have the misfortune to meet with a mad dog, I kill it; and far from thinking myself guilty of a crime, I believe I do society a kindness. Now, if you are mad, and try to bite me, I will kill you without pity. Is it my fault that your father has dishonored himself?"

"Yes, miserable wretch!" cried Morcerf, "it is your fault."

Danglars retreated a few steps.

"My fault!" said he; "you must be mad! What do I know of the Grecian history? Have I travelled in that country? Did I advise your father to sell the castle of Yanina — to betray ——"

"Silence!" said Albert, with a thundering voice. "No, it is not you who have directly made this exposure and brought this sorrow on us, but you hypocritically provoked it."

"I?"

"Yes, you! How came it known?"

"I suppose you read it in the paper in the account from Yanina?"

"Who wrote to Yanina?"

"To Yanina?"

"Yes. Who wrote for particulars concerning my father?"

"I imagine any one may write to Yanina."

"But one person only wrote!"

"One only?"

"Yes; and that was you!"

"I, doubtless, wrote. It appears to me that when about to marry your daughter to a young man, it is right to make some inquiries respecting his family; it is not only a right, but a duty."

"You wrote, sir, knowing what answer you would receive."

"I, indeed! I assure you," cried Danglars, with a confidence and security proceeding less from fear than from the interest he really felt for the young man, "I solemnly declare to you that I should never have thought of writing to Yanina did I know anything of Ali Pacha's misfortunes."

"Who, then, urged you to write? Tell me."

"*Pardieu!* it was the most simple thing in the world. I was speaking of your father's past history. I said the origin of his fortune remained obscure. The person to whom I addressed my scruples asked me where your father had acquired his property. I answered 'In Greece.' 'Then,' said he, 'write to Yanina.'"

"And who thus advised you?"

"No other than your friend Monte-Cristo."

"The Count of Monte-Cristo told you to write to Yanina?"

"Yes; and I wrote, and will show you my correspondence, if you like."

Albert and Beauchamp looked at each other.

"Sir," said Beauchamp, who had not yet spoken, "you appear to accuse the count, who is absent from Paris at this moment, and cannot justify himself."

"I accuse no one, sir," said Danglars; "I relate, and I will repeat before the count what I have said to you."

"Does the count know what answer you received?"

"Yes, I showed it to him."

"Did he know my father's Christian name was Fernand, and his family name Mondego?"

“Yes, I had told him that long since; and I did nothing more than any other would have done in my circumstances, and perhaps less. When, the day after the arrival of this answer, your father came, by the advice of Monte-Cristo, to ask my daughter’s hand for you, I decidedly refused him, but without any explanation or exposure. In short, why should I have any more to do with the affair? How did the honor or disgrace of M. de Morcerf affect me? It neither increased nor decreased my income.”

Albert felt the color mounting to his brow; there was no doubt upon the subject; Danglars defended himself with the baseness, but at the same time with the assurance of a man who speaks the truth, at least in part, if not wholly—not for conscience’s sake, but through fear. Besides, what was Morcerf seeking? It was not whether Danglars or Monte-Cristo was more or less guilty; it was a man who would answer for the offence, whether trifling or serious; it was a man who would, fight, and it was evident Danglars would not fight.

And, in addition to this, everything forgotten or unperceived before, presented itself now to his recollection. Monte-Cristo knew everything, as he had bought the daughter of Ali Pacha; and, knowing everything, he had advised Danglars to write to Yanina. The answer known, he had yielded to Albert’s wish to be introduced to Haydee, and allowed the conversation to turn on the death of Ali, and had not opposed Haydee’s recital (but having, doubtless, warned the young girl, in the few Romaic words he spoke to her, not to discover Morcerf’s father). Besides, had he not begged of Morcerf not to mention his father’s name before Haydee? Lastly he had taken Albert to Normandy when he knew the final blow approached. There could be no doubt that all had been calculated and previously arranged. Monte-Cristo, then, was in league with his father’s enemies.

Albert took Beauchamp aside, and communicated these ideas to him.

"You are right," said the latter; "M. Danglars has only been a secondary agent in this sad affair; and it is of M. de Monte-Cristo that you must demand an explanation."

Albert turned.

"Sir," said he to Danglars, "understand that I do not take a final leave of you; I must ascertain if your insinuations are just, and am going now to inquire of the Count of Monte-Cristo." He bowed to the banker, and went out with Beauchamp without appearing to notice Cavalcanti. Danglars accompanied him to the door, where he again assured Albert no motive of personal hatred influenced him against the Count de Morcerf.

## CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

## THE INSULT.

At the banker's door Beauchamp stopped Morcerf.

"Listen," said he; "just now I told you it was of M. de Monte-Cristo you must demand an explanation."

"Yes, and we are going to his house."

"Reflect, Morcerf, one moment before you go."

"On what shall I reflect?"

"On the importance of the step you are taking."

"Is it more serious than going to M. Danglars?"

"Yes; M. Danglars is a money-lover, and those who love money, you know, think too much of what they risk to be easily induced to fight a duel. The other is, on the contrary, to all appearance a true nobleman; but do you not fear to find in him the bravo?"

"I only fear one thing, namely, to find a man who will not fight."

"Do not be alarmed," said Beauchamp, "he will meet you. My only fear is that he will be too strong for you."

"My friend," said Morcerf, with a sweet smile, "that is what I wish; the happiest thing that could occur to me would be to die in my father's stead; that would save us all."

"Your mother would die of grief."

"My poor mother!" said Albert, passing his hand across his eyes, "I know she would; but better so than die of shame."

"Are you quite decided, Albert?"

"Yes; let us go."

"But do you think we shall find the count at home?"

"He intended returning some hours after me, and doubtless he is now at home."

They ordered the driver to take them to No. 30 Champs Elysées. Beauchamp wished to go in alone; but Albert observed, as this was an unusual circumstance, he might be allowed to deviate from the etiquette of duels.

The cause which the young man espoused was one so sacred that Beauchamp had only to comply with all his wishes; he yielded, and contented himself with following Morcerf. Albert bounded from the porter's lodge to the steps. He was received by Baptistin.

The count had, indeed, just arrived, but he was bathing, and had forbidden that any one should be admitted.

"But after his bath?" asked Morcerf.

"My master will go to dinner."

"And after dinner?"

"He will sleep an hour."

"Then?"

"He is going to the opera."

"Are you sure of it?" asked Albert.

"Quite, sir; my master has ordered his horses at eight o'clock precisely."

"Very good," replied Albert; "that is all I wished to know." Then, turning towards Beauchamp, "If you have anything to attend to, Beauchamp, do it directly; if you have any appointment for this evening, defer it till to-morrow. I depend on you to accompany me to the opera; and, if you can, bring Château-Renaud with you."

Beauchamp availed himself of Albert's permission, and left him, promising to call for him at a quarter before eight.

On his return home, Albert expressed his wish to Franz, Debray, and Morrel, to see them at the opera that evening. Then he went to see his mother, who since the events of the day before had refused to see any one, and had kept her room. He found her in bed, overwhelmed with grief

at this public humiliation. The sight of Albert produced the effect which might naturally be expected on Mercedes; she pressed her son's hand, and sobbed aloud; but her tears relieved her. Albert stood one moment speechless by the side of his mother's bed. It was evident, from his pale face and knit brows, that his resolution to revenge himself was growing weaker.

"My dear mother," said he, "do you know if M. de Morcerf has any enemy?"

Mercedes started; she noticed that the young man did not say my father.

"My son," she said, "persons in the count's situation have many secret enemies. Those who are known are not the most dangerous."

"I know it, and appeal to your penetration. You are of so superior a mind, nothing escapes you."

"Why do you say so?"

"Because, for instance, you noticed, on the evening of the ball we gave, M. de Monte-Cristo would eat nothing in our house."

Mercedes raised herself on her feverish arm.

"M. de Monte-Cristo!" she exclaimed; "and how is he connected with the question you asked me?"

"You know, my mother, M. de Monte-Cristo is almost an Oriental, and it is customary with them to secure full liberty of revenge by not eating or drinking in the house of their enemies."

"Do you say M. de Monte-Cristo is our enemy?" replied Mercedes, becoming paler than the sheet which covered her. "Who told you so? Why, you are mad, Albert! M. de Monte-Cristo has only shown us kindness. M. de Monte-Cristo saved your life; you yourself presented him to us. Oh! I entreat you, my son, if you had entertained such an idea, dispel it; and my counsel to you, — even more, my prayer, is, retain his friendship."

"My mother," replied the young man, "you have special reasons for telling me to conciliate that man."



"I!" said Mercedes, blushing as rapidly as she had turned pale, and again becoming paler than ever.

"Yes, doubtless; and is it not because he can never do us any harm?"

Mercedes shuddered, and fixing on her son a scrutinizing gaze:

"You speak strangely," said she to Albert, "and you appear to have some singular prejudices. What has the count done? Three days since you were with him in Normandy; only three days since we looked on him as our best friend."

An ironical smile passed over Albert's lips. Mercedes saw it, and, with her double instinct of a woman and a mother, she guessed all, but, prudent and strong-minded, she concealed both her sorrows and her fears.

Albert was silent; an instant after the countess resumed. "You came to inquire after my health; I will candidly acknowledge I am not well. You should install yourself here and cheer my solitude. I do not wish to be left alone."

"My mother," said the young man, "you know how gladly I would obey your wish; but an urgent and important affair obliges me to leave you the whole evening."

"Well!" replied Mercedes, sighing; "go, Albert, I will not make you a slave to your filial piety."

Albert pretended he did not hear, bowed to his mother, and quitted her.

Scarcely had he shut her door than Mercedes called a confidential servant, and ordered him to follow Albert wherever he should go that evening, and to come and tell her immediately what he observed. Then she rang for her lady's maid, and, weak as she was, she dressed, in order to be ready for whatever might happen.

The footman's mission was an easy one. Albert went to his room, and dressed with unusual care. At ten minutes to eight Beauchamp arrived; he had seen Châ-

teau-Renaud, who had promised to be in the orchestra before the curtain was raised.

Both got into Albert's coupé, who, having no reason to conceal where he was going, called aloud, "To the opera."

In his impatience, he had arrived before the performance commenced.

Château-Renaud was at his post; apprised by Beauchamp of the circumstances, he required no explanation from Albert. The conduct of this son, seeking to avenge his father, was so natural, that Château-Renaud did not seek to dissuade him, and was content with renewing his assurance of devotedness to Albert.

Debray was not yet come, but Albert knew he seldom lost a scene at the opera. Albert wandered about the theatre until the curtain was drawn up. He hoped to meet with M. de Monte-Cristo either in the lobby or on the stairs. The bell summoned him to his seat, and he entered the orchestra with Château-Renaud and Beauchamp. But his eyes scarcely quitted the box between the columns, which remained obstinately closed during the whole of the first act. At last, as Albert was looking at his watch, about the hundredth time, at the commencement of the second act the door opened, and Monte-Cristo, dressed in black, entered, and leaning over the front of the box looked around the pit. Morrel followed him, and looked also for his sister and brother-in-law; he soon discovered them in another box, and kissed his hand to them.

The count, in his survey of the pit, encountered a pale face and threatening eyes, which evidently sought to gain his attention. He recognized Albert, but thought it better not to notice him, as he looked so angry and discomposed. Without communicating his thoughts to his companions, he sat down, drew out his opera-glass, and looked another way. Although apparently not noticing Albert, he did not, however, lose sight of him; and when the curtain fell at the end of the second act, he saw him leave the orchestra with his two friends. Then his head was seen passing at

the back of the boxes, and the count knew the approaching storm was intended to fall on him. He was at the moment conversing cheerfully with Morrel, but he was well prepared for what might happen. The door opened, and Monte-Cristo, turning around, saw Albert, pale and trembling, followed by Beauchamp and Château-Renaud.

"Well," cried he, with that benevolent politeness which distinguished his salutation from the common civilities of the world, "my cavalier has attained his object. Good evening, M. de Morcerf."

The countenance of this man, who possessed such extraordinary control over his feelings, expressed the most perfect cordiality.

Morrel only then recollected the letter he had received from the viscount, in which, without assigning any reason, he begged him to go to the opera, but he understood that something terrible was brooding.

"We are not come here, sir, to exchange hypocritical expressions of politeness or false professions of friendship," said Albert, "but to demand an explanation, count."

The trembling voice of the young man was scarcely audible.

"An explanation at the opera?" said the count, with that calm tone and penetrating eye which characterize the man who knows his cause is good. "Little acquainted as I am with the habits of Parisians, I should not have thought this the place for such a demand."

"Still, if people will shut themselves up," said Albert, "and cannot be seen because they are bathing, dining, or asleep, we must avail ourselves of the opportunity whenever they are to be seen."

"I am not difficult of access, sir; for yesterday, if my memory does not deceive me, you were at my house."

"Yesterday I was at your house, sir," said the young man; "because then I knew not who you were."

In pronouncing these words Albert had raised his voice so as to be heard by those in the adjoining boxes and in

the lobby. Thus the attention of many was attracted by this altercation.

"Where are you come from, sir? You do not appear to be in the possession of your senses."

"Provided I understand your perfidy, sir, and succeed in making you understand that I will be revenged, I shall be reasonable enough," said Albert furiously.

"I do not understand you, sir," replied Monte-Cristo; "and if I did, your tone is too high. I am at home here, and I alone have a right to raise my voice above another's. Leave the box, sir!" Monte-Cristo pointed towards the door with the most commanding dignity.

"Ah! I shall know how to make you leave your home!" replied Albert, clasping in his convulsed grasp the glove, which Monte-Cristo did not lose sight of.

"Well, well!" said Monte-Cristo quietly, "I see you wish to quarrel with me: but I would give you one counsel, and do not forget it; it is a bad habit to make a display of a challenge. Display is not becoming to every one, M. de Morcerf."

At this name a murmur of astonishment passed around the group of spectators of this scene. They had talked of no one but Morcerf the whole day.

Albert understood the allusion in a moment, and was about to throw his glove at the count, when Morrel seized his hand, while Beauchamp and Château-Renaud, fearing the scene would surpass the limits of a challenge, held him back.

But Monte-Cristo, without rising, and leaning forward in his chair, merely extended his hand, and, taking the damp crushed glove from the clinched hand of the young man:

"Sir," said he, in a solemn tone, "I consider your glove thrown, and will return it to you around a bullet. Now leave me, or I will summon my servants to throw you out at the door."

Wild, almost unconscious, and with eyes inflamed, Al-

bert stepped back, and Morrel closed the door. Monte-Cristo took up his glass again as if nothing had happened; he certainly must have had a heart of brass and face of marble.

Morrel whispered, "What have you done to him?"

"I? nothing — at least personally," said Monte-Cristo.

"But there must be some cause for this strange scene."

"The Count de Morcerf's adventure exasperates the young man."

"Have you anything to do with it?"

"It was by Haydee the house was informed of his father's treason."

"Indeed!" said Morrel. "I had been told, but would not credit it, that the Grecian slave I have seen with you here in this very box was the daughter of Ali Pacha."

"It is, notwithstanding, true."

"Then," said Morrel, "I understand it all, and this scene was premeditated!"

"How so?"

"Yes. Albert wrote to request me to come to the opera, doubtless that I might be a witness of the insult he meant to offer you."

"Probably," said Monte-Cristo, with his imperturbable tranquillity.

"But what will you do with him?"

"With whom?"

"With Albert."

"What will I do with Albert? As certainly, Maximilian, as I now press your hand, I will kill him before ten o'clock to-morrow morning."

Morrel in his turn took Monte-Cristo's hand in both of his, and he shuddered to feel how cold and steady it was.

"Ah! count," said he, "his father loves him so much!"

"Do not speak to me of that!" said Monte-Cristo, with the first movement of anger he had betrayed; "I will make him suffer."

Morrel, amazed, let fall Monte-Cristo's hand.

"Count! count!" said he.

"Dear Maximilian," interrupted the count; "listen how adorably Duprez is singing that line, —

*'Mathilde ! idole de mon âmes !'*

I was the first to discover Duprez at Naples, and the first to applaud him. Bravo! bravo!"

Morrel saw it was useless to say more, and refrained.

The curtain, which had been drawn up during the scene with Albert, again fell, and a rap was heard at the door.

"Come in!" said Monte-Cristo, without his voice betraying the least emotion; and immediately Beauchamp appeared.

"Good evening, M. Beauchamp," said Monte-Cristo, as if this was the first time he had seen the journalist that evening; "take a seat."

Beauchamp bowed, and sitting down:

"Sir," said he, "I just now accompanied M. de Morcerf, as you saw."

"And that means," replied Monte-Cristo, laughing, "that you had probably just dined together. I am happy to see, M. de Beauchamp, you are more sober than he was."

"Sir," said Beauchamp, "Albert was wrong, I acknowledge, to betray so much anger, and I come, on my own account, to apologize for him. And having done so, on my own account only, you understand, M. le comte, I would add that I believe you too gentlemanly to refuse giving him some explanation concerning your connection with Yanina. Then I will add two words about the young Greek girl."

Monte-Cristo motioned to him to be silent.

"Come," said he, laughing, "there are all my hopes about to be destroyed."

"How so?" asked Beauchamp.

"Doubtless you wish to make me appear a very eccentric character; I am, in your opinion, a Lara, a Manfred, a

Lord Ruthven; then, just as I am arriving at the climax, you defeat your own end, and seek to make a common man of me. You bring me down to your own level, and demand explanations! Indeed, M. Beauchamp, it is quite laughable."

"Yet," replied Beauchamp, haughtily, "there are occasions when probity commands ——"

"M. Beauchamp," interrupted this strange man, "the Count of Monte-Cristo bows to none but the Count of Monte-Cristo himself. Say no more, I entreat you. I do what I please, M. Beauchamp, and it is always well done."

"Sir," replied the young man, "honest men are not to be paid with such coin. I require honorable guarantees."

"I am, sir, a living guarantee," replied Monte-Cristo, motionless, but with a threatening look; "we have both blood in our veins which we wish to shed — that is our mutual guarantee. Tell the viscount so, and that to-morrow, before ten o'clock, I shall see what color he is."

"Then I have only to make arrangements for the duel," said Beauchamp.

"It is quite immaterial to me," said Monte-Cristo, "and it was very unnecessary to disturb me at the opera for such a trifle. In France people fight with the sword or pistol, in the colonies with the carbine, in Arabia with the dagger. Tell your client that, although I am the insulted party, in order to carry out my eccentricity, I leave him the choice of arms, and will accept, without discussion, without dispute, anything, even combat by drawing lots, which is always stupid, but with me different from other people, as I am sure to gain."

"Sure to gain!" repeated Beauchamp looking with amazement at the count.

"Certainly," said Monte-Cristo, slightly shrugging up his shoulders, "otherwise I would not fight with M. de Morcerf. I shall kill him — I cannot help it. Only by a

single line, this evening, at my house, let me know the arms and the hour; I do not like to be kept waiting."

"Pistols, then, at eight o'clock, in the Bois de Vincennes," said Beauchamp, quite disconcerted, not knowing if he were dealing with an arrogant braggadocio or a supernatural being.

"Very well, sir," said Monte-Cristo. "Now that all is settled, do let me see the performance, and tell your friend Albert not to come any more this evening; he will hurt himself with all his ill-chosen barbarisms: let him go home and go to sleep."

Beauchamp left the box, perfectly amazed.

"Now," said Monte-Cristo, turning towards Morrel, "I may depend upon you, may I not?"

"Certainly," said Morrel, "I am at your service, count; still ——"

"What?"

"It is desirable I should know the real cause."

"That is to say, you would rather not?"

"No."

"The young man himself is acting blindfolded, and knows not the true cause, which is known only to God and to me; but I give you my word, Morrel, that God, who does know it, will be on our side."

"Enough," said Morrel; "who is your second witness?"

"I know no one in Paris, Morrel, on whom I could confer that honor besides you and your brother, Emmanuel. Do you think Emmanuel would oblige me?"

"I will answer for him, count."

"Well, that is all I require. To-morrow morning, at seven o'clock, you will be with me, will you not?"

"We will."

"Hush! the curtain is rising. Listen! I never lose a note of this opera if I can avoid it; the music of 'William Tell' is so sweet!"



## CHAPTER LXXXIX.

## THE NIGHT.

M. DE MONTE-CRISTO waited, according to his usual custom, until Duprez had sung his famous "Suivez moi;" then he rose and went out.

Morrel took leave of him at the door, renewing his promise to be with him the next morning at seven o'clock, and to bring Emmanuel with him.

Then he stepped into his coupé, calm and smiling, and was at home in five minutes. No one who knew the count could mistake his expression, when, on entering, he said:

"Ali, bring me my pistols with the ivory cross."

Ali brought the box to his master, who examined his arms with a solicitude very natural to a man who is about to entrust his life to a little powder and shot.

These were particular pistols, which Monte-Cristo had had made to shoot at a target in his room. A cap was sufficient to drive out the ball, and from the adjoining room no one would have suspected that the count was, as sportsmen would say, keeping his hand in. He was just taking one in his hand, and looking for the point to aim, on a little iron plate, which served him as a target, when his cabinet door opened, and Baptistin entered.

Before he had spoken a word, the count perceived in the next room a female veiled, who had followed closely after Baptistin, and now seeing the count with a pistol in his hand and swords on the table, she rushed in.

Baptistin looked at his master, who made a sign to him, and he went out, closing the door after him.

"Who are you, madame?" said the count to the veiled female.

The stranger cast one look around her, to be certain they were quite alone; then bending, as if she would have knelt, and joining her hands, she said, with an accent of despair:

"Edmond, you will not kill my son?"

The count retreated a step, uttered a slight exclamation, and let fall the pistol he held.

"What name did you pronounce then, Madame de Morcerf?" said he.

"Yours!" cried she, throwing back her veil, — "yours, which I alone, perhaps, have not forgotten. Edmond, it is not Madame de Morcerf who is come to you, it is Mercedes."

"Mercedes is dead," said Monte-Cristo. "I know no one now of that name."

"Mercedes lives, sir, and she remembers, for she alone recognized you when she saw you, and even before she saw you, by your voice, Edmond — by the simple sound of your voice; and from that moment she has followed your steps, watched you, feared you, and she needs not to inquire what hand has dealt the blow which now strikes M. de Morcerf."

"Fernand, do you mean?" replied Monte-Cristo, with bitter irony; "since we are recalling names, let us remember them all."

Monte-Cristo had pronounced the name of Fernand with such an expression of hatred, that Mercedes felt a thrill of terror run through every vein.

"You see, Edmond, I am not mistaken, and have cause to say, 'Spare my son!'"

"And who told you, madame, I have any hostile intentions against your son?"

"No one, in truth; but a mother has a twofold sight. I

guessed all; I followed him this evening to the opera, and have seen all."

"If you have seen all, madame, you know that the son of Fernand has publicly insulted me," said Monte-Cristo, with awful calmness.

"Oh! for pity's sake!"

"You have seen that he would have thrown his glove in my face, if Morrel, one of my friends, had not stopped him."

"Listen to me: my son has also guessed who you are; he attributes his father's misfortunes to you."

"Madame, you are mistaken; they are not misfortunes—it is a punishment. It is not I who strike M. de Morcerf; it is Providence which punishes him."

"And why do you represent Providence?" cried Mercedes. "Why do you remember when it forgets? What are Yanina and its vizier to you, Edmond? What injury has Fernand Mondego done you in betraying Ali Tebelen?"

"And, madame," replied Monte-Cristo, "all this is an affair between the French captain and the daughter of Vasiliki. It does not concern me, you are right; and if I have sworn to revenge myself, it is not on the French captain, nor on the Count de Morcerf, but on the fisherman Fernand, the husband of the Catalan Mercedes."

"Ah! sir," cried the countess, "how terrible a vengeance for a fault which fatality made me commit! for I am the only culprit, Edmond; and if you owe revenge to any one, it is to me, who had not fortitude to bear your absence and my solitude."

"But," exclaimed Monte-Cristo, "why was I absent? And why were you alone?"

"Because you had been arrested, Edmond, and were a prisoner."

"And why was I arrested? Why was I a prisoner?"

"I do not know," said Mercedes.

"You do not, madame; at least I hope not. But I will









tell you. I was arrested and became a prisoner because under the arbor of La Reserve, the day before I was to marry you, a man named Danglars wrote this letter, which the fisherman Fernand himself posted."

Monte-Cristo went to a secrétaire, opened a drawer by a spring, from which he took a paper which had lost its original color, and the ink of which had become a rusty hue; this he placed in the hands of Mercedes. It was Danglars's letter to the procureur du roi, which the Count of Monte-Cristo, disguised as a clerk from the house of Thomson & French, had taken from the record of Edmond Dantes, on the day he had paid the two hundred thousand francs to M. de Boville. Mercedes read with terror the following lines:

"The procureur du roi is informed by a friend to the throne and the religious institutions of his country, that an individual named Edmond Dantes, second in command on board the 'Pharaoh,' this day arrived from Smyrna, after having touched at Naples and Porto-Ferrajo, has been the bearer of a letter from Murat to the usurper, and again taken charge of another letter from the usurper to the Bonapartist club in Paris. Ample corroboration of this statement may be obtained by arresting the above-mentioned Edmond Dantes, who either carries the letter for Paris about with him, or has it at his father's abode. Should it not be found in possession of either father or son, then it will assuredly be discovered in the cabin belonging to the said Dantes on board the 'Pharaoh.'"

"How dreadful!" said Mercedes, passing her hand across her brow, moist with perspiration; "and that letter ——"

"I bought it for two hundred thousand francs, madame," said Monte-Cristo; "but that is a trifle, since it enables me to justify myself to you."

"And the result of that letter ——"



"You well know, madame, was my arrest; but you do not know how long that arrest lasted. You do not know that I remained for fourteen years within a quarter of a league of you, in a dungeon in the Château d'If. You do not know that each day of those fourteen years I renewed the vow of vengeance which I had made the first day; and yet I knew not you had married Fernand, my calumniator, and that my father had died of hunger!"

"Can it be?" cried Mercedes, shuddering.

"That is what I heard on leaving my prison, fourteen years after I had entered it, and that is why, on account of the living Mercedes, and my deceased father, I have sworn to revenge myself on Fernand, and—I have revenged myself."

"And you are sure the unhappy Fernand did that?"

"I am satisfied, madame, he did what I have told you; besides, that is not much more odious than a Frenchman by adoption having passed over to the English; a Spaniard by birth having fought against the Spaniards; a stipendiary of Ali having betrayed and murdered Ali. Compared with such things, what is the letter you have just read? A lover's deception, which the woman who has married that man ought certainly to forgive, but not so the lover who was to have married her. Well! the French did not avenge themselves on the traitor; the Spaniards did not shoot the traitor; Ali, in his tomb, left the traitor unpunished; but I, betrayed, sacrificed, buried, have risen from my tomb, by the grace of God, to punish that man. He sends me for that purpose, and here I am."

The poor woman's head and arms fell; her legs bent under her, and she fell on her knees.

"Forgive, Edmond, forgive for my sake, who loves you still!"

The dignity of the wife stopped the enthusiasm of the lover and mother. Her forehead almost touched the carpet, when the count sprung forward and raised her. Then, seated on a chair, she looked at the manly countenance of

Monte-Cristo, on which grief and hatred still impressed a threatening expression.

"Not crush that accursed race!" murmured he; "abandon my purpose at the moment of its accomplishment! Impossible, madame, impossible!"

"Edmond," said the poor mother, who tried every means, "when I call you Edmond, why do you not call me Mercedes?"

"Mercedes!" repeated Monte-Cristo, "Mercedes! Well! yes, you are right; that name has still its charms; and this is the first time for a long period that I have pronounced it so distinctly. Oh, Mercedes! I have uttered your name with the sigh of melancholy, with the groan of sorrow, with the last effort of despair; I have uttered it when frozen with cold, crouched on the straw in my dungeon; I have uttered it, consumed with heat rolling on the stone floor of my prison. Mercedes, I must revenge myself, for I suffered fourteen years — fourteen years I wept, I cursed; now I tell you, Mercedes, I must revenge myself!"

The count, fearing to yield to the entreaties of her he had so ardently loved, recalled his sufferings to the assistance of his hatred.

"Revenge yourself, then, Edmond," cried the poor mother; "but let your vengeance fall on the culprits — on him, on me, but not on my son!"

Monte-Cristo groaned, and seized his beautiful hair with both hands.

"Edmond," continued Mercedes, with her arms extended towards the count, "since I first knew you, I have adored your name, have respected your memory. Edmond, my friend, do not compel me to tarnish that noble and fine image reflected incessantly on the mirror of my heart. Edmond, if you knew all the prayers I have addressed to God for you while I thought you were living and since I have thought you must be dead! Yes, dead, alas! I thought your dead body was buried at the foot of some gloomy tower; I thought your corpse was precipitated to

the bottom of one of those gulfs where jailers roll their dead prisoners, and I wept! What could I do for you, Edmond, besides pray and weep? Listen; during ten years I dreamed each night the same dream. I had been told you had endeavored to escape; that you had taken the place of another prisoner; that you had slipped into the winding-sheet of a dead body; that you had been precipitated alive from the top of the Château d'If; and the cry you uttered as you dashed upon the rocks first revealed to your jailers that they were your murderers. Well! Edmond, I swear to you by the head of that son for whom I entreat your pity — Edmond, during ten years I have seen every night men balancing something shapeless and unknown at the top of a rock; during ten years I have heard each night a terrible cry which has awoken me, shuddering and cold. And I, too, Edmond — oh! believe me — guilty as I was — oh! yes, I too have suffered much!”

“Have you felt your father die in your absence?” cried Monte-Cristo, again thrusting his hands in his hair; “have you seen the woman you loved giving her hand to your rival while you were perishing at the bottom of a dungeon?”

“No,” interrupted Mercedes, “but I have seen him whom I loved on the point of murdering my son.”

Mercedes pronounced these words with such deep anguish, with an accent of such intense despair, that Monte-Cristo could not restrain a sob. The lion was daunted; the avenger was conquered.

“What do you ask of me?” said he — “your son’s life? Well, he shall live!”

Mercedes uttered a cry which made the tears start from Monte-Cristo’s eyes; but these tears disappeared almost instantaneously, for, doubtless, God had sent some angel to collect them; far more precious were they in his eyes than the richest pearls of Guzerat and of Ophir.

“Oh!” said she, seizing the count’s hand and raising it

to her lips; "oh, thank you, thank you, Edmond. Now you are exactly what I dreamed you were — such as I always loved you. Oh, now I may say so."

"So much the better," replied Monte-Cristo; "as that poor Edmond will not have long to be loved by you. Death is about to return to the tomb, the phantom to retire in darkness."

"What did you say, Edmond?"

"I say, since you commanded me, Mercedes, I must die."

"Die! and who told you so? Who talks of dying? Whence have you these ideas of death?"

"You do not suppose that, publicly outraged in the face of a whole theatre, in the presence of your friends and those of your son — challenged by a boy, who will glory in my pardon as in a victory, you do not suppose I can for one moment wish to live. What I most loved, after you, Mercedes, was myself, my dignity, and that strength which rendered me superior to other men; that strength was my life. With one word you have crushed it, and I die."

"But the duel will not take place, Edmond, since you forgive?"

"It will take place," said Monte-Cristo, in a most solemn tone; "but instead of your son's blood staining the ground, mine will flow."

Mercedes shrieked, and sprung towards Monte-Cristo, but suddenly stopping:

"Edmond," said she; "there is a God above us, since you live, since I have seen you again; I trust to him from my heart. While waiting his assistance, I trust to your word; you have said my son should live, have you not?"

"Yes, madame, he shall live," said Monte-Cristo, surprised that without more emotion Mercedes had accepted the heroic sacrifice he made for her.

Mercedes extended her hand to the count.

"Edmond," said she, — and her eyes were wet with tears while looking at him to whom she spoke, — "how noble it

is of you, how great the action you have just performed; how sublime to have taken pity on a poor woman who offered herself to you with every chance against her! Alas! I am grown old with grief more than with years, and cannot now remind my Edmond by a smile, or by a look, of that Mercedes whom he once spent so many hours in contemplating. Ah! believe me, Edmond, I told you I too had suffered much. I repeat, it is melancholy to pass one's life without having one joy to recall, without preserving a single hope; but that proves that all is not yet over. No! it is not finished; I feel it by what remains in my heart. Oh! I repeat it, Edmond; what you have just done is beautiful — it is grand — it is sublime."

"Do you say so now, Mercedes? and what would you say if you knew the extent of the sacrifice I make to you? But, no, no, you cannot imagine what I lose in sacrificing my life at this moment."

Mercedes looked at the count with an air which depicted at the same time her astonishment, her admiration, and her gratitude.

Monte-Cristo pressed his forehead on his burning hands, as if his brain could no longer bear alone the weight of its thoughts.

"Edmond," said Mercedes, "I have but one word more to say to you."

The count smiled bitterly.

"Edmond," continued she, "you will see, if my face is pale, if my eyes are dull, if my beauty is gone; if Mercedes, in short, no longer resembles her former self in her features, you will see her heart is still the same. Adieu, then, Edmond; I have nothing more to ask of Heaven — I have seen you again, and have found you as noble and as great as formerly you were. Adieu, Edmond, adieu, and thank you."

But the count did not answer. Mercedes opened the door of the cabinet and had disappeared before he had recovered from the painful and profound reverie into which

his thwarted vengeance had plunged him. The clock of the Invalides struck one when the carriage which conveyed Madame de Morcerf away rolled on the pavement of the Champs Elysées, and made Monte-Cristo raise his head.

“What a fool I was,” said he, “not to tear my heart out on the day when I resolved to revenge myself!”

## CHAPTER XC

## THE MEETING.

AFTER Mercedes had left Monte-Cristo, a gloomy shadow seemed to overspread everything. Around him and within him the flight of thought appeared stopped; his energetic mind slumbered as does the body after extreme fatigue.

“What!” said he to himself, while the lamp and the wax-lights were nearly burned out, and the servants were waiting impatiently in the anteroom; “what! this edifice which I have been so long preparing — which I have reared with so much care and toil — is to be crumbled by a single touch, a word, even a slight breath! Yes, this self, of whom I thought so much, of whom I was so proud, who had appeared so worthless in the dungeons of the Château d’If, and whom I had succeeded in making so great, will be but a lump of clay to-morrow. Alas! it is not the death of the body I regret; for is not that destruction of the vital principle the rest to which everything is tending, to which every unhappy being aspires, the repose of matter after which I so long sighed, and which I was seeking to attain by the painful process of starvation when Faria appeared in my dungeon? What is death for me but one step more towards repose? No, it is not existence, then, that I regret, but the ruin of my projects, so slowly carried out, so laboriously framed. Providence is now opposed to them when I most thought it would be propitious. It is not God’s will they should be accomplished. This burden, almost as heavy as a world, which I had raised, and had thought to bear to the end, was too great for my strength, and I was compelled to lay it down in the middle

of my career. Oh! shall I then again become a fatalist, whom fourteen years of despair and ten of hope had rendered a believer in Providence? and all this, all this, because my heart, which I thought dead, was only sleeping — because it has awaked and has beaten again — because I have yielded to the pain of the emotion excited in my breast by a woman's voice. Yet," continued the count, becoming each moment more absorbed in the anticipation of the dreadful sacrifice of the morrow, which Mercedes had accepted, "yet, it is impossible that so noble-minded a woman should thus, through selfishness, consent to my death when in the prime of life and strength; it is impossible she can carry to such a point maternal love, or rather delirium. There are virtues which become crimes by exaggeration. No; she must have conceived some pathetic scene; she will come and throw herself between us, and what would be sublime here will appear there ridiculous."

The blush of pride mounted to the count's forehead as this thought passed through his mind.

"Ridiculous!" repeated he, "and the ridicule will fall on me. I ridiculous! no, I would rather die."

By thus exaggerating to his own mind the anticipated ill-fortune of the next day, to which he had condemned himself by promising Mercedes to spare her son, the count at last exclaimed:

"Folly! folly! folly! to carry generosity so far as to place myself as a mark for that young man to aim at. He will never believe my death was a suicide; and yet it is important for the honor of my memory (and this, surely, is not vanity, but a justifiable pride), it is important the world should know that I have consented, by my free will, to stop my arm, already raised to strike, and that with that arm, so powerful against others, I have struck myself. It must be — it shall be."

Seizing a pen he drew a paper from a secret drawer in his bureau, and traced at the bottom of that paper, which was no other than his will, made since his arrival in Paris,



a sort of codicil, clearly explaining the nature of his death.

"I do this, O my God!" said he, with his eyes raised to heaven, "as much for Thy honor as for mine. I have during ten years considered myself the agent of Thy vengeance; and other wretches, like Morcerf, a Danglars, a Villefort, even that Morcerf himself, must not imagine that chance has freed them from their enemy. Let them know, on the contrary, that their punishment, which had been decreed by Providence, is only delayed by my present determination, that although they escape it in this world it awaits them in another, and that they are only exchanging time for eternity."

While he was thus agitated by these gloomy uncertainties, these wretched waking dreams of grief, the first rays of twilight pierced his windows, and shone upon the pale blue paper on which he had just traced his justification of Providence. It was just five o'clock in the morning, when a slight noise reached his ear, which appeared like a stifled sigh; he turned his head, looked around him, and saw no one; but the sound was repeated distinctly enough to convince him of its reality. He arose, and quietly opening the door of the drawing-room, saw Haydee, who had fallen on a chair with her arms hanging down, and her beautiful head thrown back. She had been standing at the door to prevent his going out without seeing her, until sleep, which the young cannot resist, had overpowered her frame, wearied as she was with watching so long. The noise of the door did not awaken her, and Monte-Cristo gazed at her with affectionate regret.

"She remembered she had a son," said he, "and I forgot I had a daughter." Then shaking his head sorrowfully, "Poor Haydee!" said he, "she wished to see me to speak to me; she has feared or guessed something. Oh! I cannot go without taking leave of her; I cannot die without confiding her to some one." He quietly regained his seat, and wrote under the other lines:

"I bequeath to Maximilian Morrel, captain, and son of my former patron, Pierre Morrel, shipowner at Marseilles, the sum of twenty millions, a part of which may be offered to his sister, Julie, and brother-in-law, Emmanuel, if he does not fear this increase of fortune may mar their happiness. These twenty millions are concealed in my grotto at Monte-Cristo, of which Bertuccio knows the secret. If his heart is free, and he will marry Haydee, the daughter of Ali Pacha, of Yanina, whom I have brought up with the love of a father, and who has shown the love and tenderness of a daughter for me, he will thus accomplish my last wish.

"This will has already constituted Haydee heiress of the rest of my fortune: consisting in lands, rents in England, Austria, and Holland, furniture in my different palaces and houses, and which, without the twenty millions, and the legacies to my servants may still amount to sixty millions."

He was finishing the last line, when a cry behind him made him start, and the pen fell from his hand.

"Haydee," said he, "did you read it?"

"Oh! my lord," said she, "why are you writing thus at such an hour? why are you bequeathing all your fortune to me? Are you going to leave me?"

"I am going on a journey, dear child," said Monte-Cristo, with an expression of infinite tenderness and melancholy; "and if any misfortune should happen to me —" The count stopped.

"Well?" asked the young girl, with an authoritative tone the count had never observed before, and which startled him.

"Well, if any misfortune happens to me," replied Monte-Cristo, "I wish my daughter to be happy."

Haydee smiled sorrowfully and shook her head.

"Do you think of dying, my lord?" said she.

"The wise man has said, 'It is good to think of death,' my child."

"Well, if you die," said she, "bequeath your fortune to others; for if you die, I shall require nothing;" and, taking the paper, she tore it in four pieces and threw it in the middle of the room. Then, the effort having exhausted her strength, she fell, not asleep this time, but fainting on the floor. The count leaned over her and raised her in his arms; and seeing that sweet face pale, those lovely eyes closed, that beautiful form motionless, and to all appearance lifeless, the idea occurred to him for the first time that perhaps she loved him otherwise than a daughter loves a father.

"Alas!" murmured he, with intense suffering; "I might, then, have been happy yet." Then he carried Haydee to her room, resigned her to the care of her attendants, and returning to his cabinet, which he shut quickly this time, he again copied the destroyed will. As he was finishing, the sound of a cabriolet entering the yard was heard. Monte-Cristo approached the window, and saw Maximilian and Emmanuel alight.

"Good!" said he, "it was time;" and he sealed his will with three seals. One moment afterwards he heard a noise in the drawing-room, and he went to open the door himself. Morrel was there; he had come twenty minutes before the time appointed.

"I am perhaps come too soon, count," said he; "but I frankly acknowledge I have not closed my eyes all night, nor any one in my house. I required to see you strong in your courageous assurance to recover myself."

Monte-Cristo could not resist this proof of affection; he not only extended his hand to the young man, but flew to him with open arms.

"Morrel," said he, "it is a happy day for me to feel I am beloved by such a man as you. Good morning, Emmanuel. You will come with me, then, Maximilian?"

"Did you doubt it?" said the young captain.

"But if I were wrong——"

"I watched you during the whole scene of that challenge,

yesterday; I have been thinking of your firmness all this night, and I said, Justice must be on your side, or man's countenance is no longer to be relied on."

"But, Morrel, Albert is your friend?"

"A simple acquaintance, sir."

"You met on the same day you first saw me?"

"Truly, but I should not have recollected it had you not reminded me."

"Thank you, Morrel."

Then ringing the bell once, "Look," said he to Ali, who came immediately, "take that to my solicitor. It is my will, Morrel. When I am dead, you will go and examine it."

"What!" said Morrel, "you dead?"

"Yes; must I not be prepared for everything, dear friend? But what did you do yesterday after you left me?"

"I went to Tortoni, where, as I expected, I found Beauchamp and Château-Renaud. I own I was seeking them."

"Why, when all was arranged?"

"Listen, count; the affair is serious and unavoidable."

"Did you doubt it?"

"No; the offence was public, and every one is already talking of it."

"Well?"

"Well, I hoped to get an exchange of arms, to substitute the sword for the pistol. The pistol is blind."

"Have you succeeded?" asked Monte-Cristo quickly, with an imperceptible gleam of hope.

"No, for your skill with the sword is so well known."

"Ah! who has betrayed me?"

"The skilful swordsmen whom you have conquered."

"And you failed?"

"They positively refused."

"Morrel," said the count, "have you ever seen me fire a pistol?"

"Never."

"Well, we have time; look."

"Monte-Cristo took the pistols he held in his hand when Mercedes entered, and fixing an ace of clubs against the iron plate, with four shots he successively shot off the four sides of the club. At each shot Morrel turned pale. He examined the balls with which Monte-Cristo performed this dexterous feat, and saw that they were no larger than deer-shot.

"It is astonishing!" said he. "Look, Emmanuel."

Then turning towards Monte-Cristo, "Count," said he, "in the name of all that is dear to you, I entreat you not to kill Albert! the unhappy youth has a mother."

"You are right," said Monte-Cristo, "and I have none."

These words were uttered in a tone which made Morrel shudder.

"You are the offended party, count."

"Doubtless; what does that imply?"

"That you will fire first."

"I fire first?"

"Oh! I obtained, or rather claimed that; we had conceded enough for them to yield us that."

"And at what distance?"

"Twenty paces."

A terrific smile passed over the count's lips.

"Morrel," said he, "do not forget what you have just seen."

"The only chance for Albert's safety, then, will arise from your emotion."

"I suffer from emotion?" said Monte-Cristo.

"Or from your generosity, my friend; to so good a marksman as you are, I may say what would appear absurd to another."

"What is that?"

"Break his arm — wound him — but do not kill him."

"I will tell you, Morrel," said the count, "that I do not need entreating to spare the life of M. de Morcerf; he

shall be so well spared, that he will return quietly with his two friends, while I —— ”

“ And you ? ”

“ That will be another thing ; I shall be brought home.”

“ No, no ! ” cried Maximilian, not knowing how to contain himself.

“ As I told you, my dear Morrel, M. de Morcerf will kill me.”

Morrel looked at him in utter unconsciousness.

“ But what has happened, then, since last evening, count ? ”

“ The same thing that happened to Brutus the night before the battle of Philippi — I have seen a phantom.”

“ And that phantom —— ”

“ Told me, Morrel, I had lived long enough.”

Maximilian and Emmanuel looked at each other.

Monte-Cristo drew out his watch.

“ Let us go,” said he ; “ it is five minutes past seven, and the appointment was for eight o’clock.”

A carriage was in readiness at the door. Monte-Cristo stepped into it with his two friends. He had stopped a moment in the passage to listen at a door, and Maximilian and Emmanuel, who had considerably passed forward a few steps, thought they heard him answer, by a sigh, a sob from within.

As the clock struck eight, they drove up to the place of meeting.

“ We are the first,” said Morrel, looking out of the window.

“ Excuse me, sir,” said Baptistin, who had followed his master with indescribable terror, “ but I think I see a carriage down there under the trees.”

Monte-Cristo sprung lightly from his carriage, and offered his hand to assist Emmanuel and Maximilian.

The latter retained the count’s hand between his. “ I like,” said he, “ to feel a hand like this when its owner relies on the goodness of his cause.”

"Truly," said Emmanuel, "I perceive two young men down there, who are evidently waiting."

Monte-Cristo drew Morrel, not aside, but a step or two behind his brother-in-law.

"Maximilian," said he, "are your affections disengaged?"

Morrel looked at Monte-Cristo with astonishment.

"I do not seek your confidence, my dear friend. I only ask you a simple question; answer it—that is all I require."

"I love a young girl, count!"

"Do you love her much?"

"More than my life!"

"Another hope defeated!" said the count. Then, with a sigh, "Poor Haydee!" murmured he.

"In truth, count, if I knew less of you, I should think you were less brave than you are."

"Because I sigh when thinking of some one I am leaving? Come, Morrel, it is not like a soldier to be so bad a judge of courage. Do I regret life? What is it to me, who have passed twenty years between life and death? Moreover, do not alarm yourself, Morrel; this weakness, if it is such, is betrayed to you alone. I know the world is a drawing-room, from which we must retreat politely and honestly; that is, with a bow, and all debts of honor paid."

"That is to the purpose. Have you brought your arms?"

"I?—what for? I hope those gentlemen have theirs."

"I will inquire," said Morrel.

"Do; but make no treaty—you understand me?"

"You need not fear."

Morrel advanced towards Beauchamp and Château-Re-naud, who, seeing his intention, came to meet him.

The three young people bowed to each other courteously, if not affably.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," said Morrel, "but I do not see M. de Morcerf."

"He sent us word this morning," replied Château-Renaud, "that he would meet us on the ground."

"Ah!" said Morrel.

Beauchamp pulled out his watch. "It is only five minutes past eight," said he to Morrel; "there is not much time lost yet."

"Oh! I made no allusion of that kind," replied Morrel.

"There is a carriage coming," said Château-Renaud.

It advanced rapidly along one of the avenues leading towards the open space where they were assembled.

"You are doubtless provided with pistols, gentlemen? M. de Monte-Cristo yields his right of using his."

"We had anticipated this kindness on the part of the count," said Beauchamp, "and I have brought some arms which I bought eight or ten days since, thinking to want them on a similar occasion. They are quite new, and have not yet been used. Will you examine them?"

"Oh, M. Beauchamp, if you assure me M. de Morcerf does not know these arms, you may readily believe your word will be quite sufficient."

"Gentlemen," said Château-Renaud, "it is not Morcerf coming in that carriage; faith, it is Franz and Debray!"

The two young men he announced were indeed approaching.

"What chance brings you here, gentlemen?" said Château-Renaud, shaking hands with each of them.

"Because," said Debray, "Albert sent this morning to request us to come."

Beauchamp and Château-Renaud exchanged looks of astonishment.

"I think I understand his reason," said Morrel.

"What is it?"

"Yesterday afternoon I received a letter from M. de Morcerf, begging me to attend the opera."

"And I," said Debray.

"And I, also," said Franz.



"And we, too," added Beauchamp and Château-Renaud. "Having wished you all to witness the challenge, he now wishes you to be present at the combat."

"Exactly so," said the young man; "you have probably guessed rightly."

"But after all these arrangements, he does not come himself," said Château-Renaud; "Albert is ten minutes after time."

"There he comes!" said Beauchamp, "on horseback, at full gallop, followed by a servant."

"How imprudent," said Château-Renaud, "to come on horseback to fight with the pistol, after all the instructions I had given him."

"And besides," said Beauchamp, "with a collar above his cravat, an open coat, and white waistcoat! Why has he not painted a spot upon his heart? It would have been more simple."

Meanwhile Albert had arrived within ten paces of the group formed by the five young men. He jumped from his horse, threw the bridle on his servant's arm and joined them. He was pale, and his eyes were red and swollen; it was evident he had not slept. A shade of melancholy gravity overspread his countenance, which was not natural to him.

"I thank you, gentlemen," said he, "for having complied with my request; I feel extremely grateful for this mark of friendship."

Morrel had stepped back as Morcerf approached, and remained at a short distance.

"And to you, also, M. Morrel, my thanks are due. Come, there cannot be too many."

"Sir," said Maximilian, "you are perhaps not aware I am M. de Monte-Cristo's friend?"

"I was not sure, but I expected it. So much the better; the more honorable men there are here, the better I shall be satisfied."

"M. Morrel," said Château-Renaud, "will you apprise

the Count of Monte-Cristo that M. de Morcerf is arrived, and we are at his command?"

Morrel was preparing to fulfill his commission. Beauchamp had meanwhile drawn the box of pistols from the carriage.

"Stop, gentlemen!" said Albert; "I have two words to say to the Count of Monte-Cristo."

"In private?" asked Morrel.

"No, sir; before all who are here."

Albert's witnesses looked at each other; Franz and Debray exchanged some words in a whisper; and Morrel, rejoiced at this unexpected incident, went to fetch the count, who was walking in a retired path with Emmanuel.

"What does he want with me?" said Monte-Cristo.

"I do not know, but he wishes to speak to you."

"Ah!" said Monte-Cristo, "I trust he is not going to tempt me by some fresh insult!"

"I do not think such is his intention," said Morrel.

The count advanced, accompanied by Maximilian and Emmanuel; his calm and serene look formed a singular contrast to Albert's grief-stricken face, who approached also, followed by the four young men.

When at three paces distant, Albert and the count stopped.

"Approach, gentlemen," said Albert; "I wish you not to lose one word of what I am about to have the honor of saying to the Count of Monte-Cristo; for it must be repeated by you to all who listen to it, strange as it may appear to you."

"Proceed, sir," said the count.

"Sir," said Albert, at first with a tremulous voice, but which gradually became firmer, "I reproached you with exposing the conduct of M. de Morcerf in Epirus; for, guilty as I knew he was, I thought you had no right to punish him; but I have since learned you have that right. It is not Fernand Mondego's treachery towards Ali Pacha which induces me so readily to excuse you, but the treachery of the fisherman Fernand towards you, and the almost

unheard-of miseries which were its consequences; and I say, and proclaim it publicly, that you were justified in revenging yourself on my father; and I, his son, thank you for not using greater severity."

Had a thunderbolt fallen in the midst of the spectators of this unexpected scene, it would not have surprised them more than did Albert's declaration.

As for Monte-Cristo, his eyes slowly rose towards heaven with an expression of infinite gratitude. He could not understand how Albert's fiery nature, of which he had seen so much among the Roman bandits, had suddenly stooped to this humiliation. He recognized the influence of Mercedes, and saw why her noble heart had not opposed the sacrifice she knew beforehand would be useless.

"Now, sir," said Albert, "if you think my apology sufficient, pray give me your hand. Next to the merit of infallibility, which you appear to possess, I rank that of candidly acknowledging a fault. But this confession concerns me only. I acted well as a man, but you have acted better than a man. An angel alone could have saved one of us from death—that angel came from heaven, if not to make us friends (which, alas! fatality renders impossible), at least to make us esteem each other."

Monte-Cristo, with moistened eye, heaving breast, and lips half open, extended to Albert a hand, which the latter pressed with a sentiment resembling respectful fear.

"Gentlemen," said he, "M. de Monte-Cristo receives my apology; I had acted hastily towards him. Hasty actions are generally bad ones. Now my fault is repaired. I hope the world will not call me cowardly for acting as my conscience dictated. But if any one should entertain a false opinion of me," added he, drawing himself up as if he would challenge both friends and enemies, "I shall endeavor to correct his mistake."

"What, then, has happened during the night?" asked Beauchamp of Château-Renaud; "we appear to make a very sorry figure here."

"In truth, what Albert has just done is either very despicable or very noble," replied the baron.

"What can it mean?" said Debray to Franz. "The Count of Monte-Cristo acts dishonorably to M. de Morcerf, and is justified by his son! Had I ten Yaninas in my family, I should only consider myself the more bound to fight ten times."

As for Monte-Cristo, his head was bent down, his arms were powerless; bowing under the weight of twenty-four years' reminiscences, he thought not of Albert, of Beauchamp, of Château-Renaud, or any of that group; but he thought of that courageous woman who had come to plead for her son's life, to whom he had offered his, and who had now saved it by the revelation of a dreadful family secret, capable of destroying forever, in that young man's heart, every feeling of filial piety.

"Providence still!" murmured he; "now, only, am I fully convinced of being the emissary of God!"

## CHAPTER XCI.

## THE MOTHER AND SON.

THE Count of Monte-Cristo bowed to the five young people with a melancholy and dignified smile, and got into his carriage with Maximilian and Emmanuel. Albert, Beauchamp, and Château-Renaud remained alone. The young man's look at his two friends, without being timid, appeared to ask their opinion of what he had just done.

"Indeed, my dear friend," said Beauchamp, first, who had either the most feeling or the least dissimulation, "allow me to congratulate you: this is a very unhopèd-for conclusion of a very disagreeable affair."

Albert remained silent and wrapped in thought. Château-Renaud contented himself with tapping his boot with his flexible cane.

"Are we not going?" said he, after this embarrassing silence.

"When you please," replied Beauchamp; "allow me only time to compliment M. de Morcerf, who has given proof of such chivalric generosity so rare!"

"Oh, yes!" said Château-Renaud.

"It is magnificent," continued Beauchamp, "to be able to exercise so much self-control!"

"Assuredly; as for me, I should have been incapable of it," said Château-Renaud, with most significant coolness.

"Gentlemen," interrupted Albert, "I think you did not understand that something very serious had passed between M. de Monte-Cristo and myself."

"Possibly, possibly," said Beauchamp, immediately; "but every simpleton would not be able to understand

your heroism, and sooner or later you will find yourself compelled to explain it to them more energetically than would be convenient to your bodily health and the duration of your life. May I give you a friendly counsel? Set out for Naples, the Hague, or St. Petersburg — calm countries, where the point of honor is better understood than among our hot-headed Parisians. Seek quietude and oblivion, so that you may return peaceably to France after a few years. Am I not right, M. de Château-Renaud?"

"That is quite my opinion," said the gentleman; "nothing induces serious duels so much as a fruitless one."

"Thank you, gentlemen," replied Albert, with a smile of indifference; "I shall follow your advice, not because you give it, but because I had before intended to quit France. I thank you equally for the service you have rendered me in being my seconds. It is deeply engraven on my heart, after what you have just said. I remember that only."

Château-Renaud and Beauchamp looked at each other; the impression was the same on both of them, and the tone in which Morcerf had just expressed his thanks was so determined, that the position would have become embarrassing for all if the conversation had continued.

"Farewell, Albert!" said Beauchamp, suddenly, carelessly extending his hand to the young man without the latter appearing to rouse from his lethargy; in fact, he did not notice the offered hand.

"Farewell!" said Château-Renaud in his turn, keeping the little cane in his left hand, and bowing with his right.

Albert's lips scarcely whispered, "Farewell," but his look was more explicit; it embraced a whole poem of restrained anger, proud disdain, and generous indignation. He preserved his melancholy and motionless position for some time after his two friends had regained their carriage; then, suddenly loosing his horse from the little tree to which his servant had fastened it, he sprang on it and galloped off in the direction of Paris. In a quarter of an

hour he was entering the hotel of the Rue du Helder. As he alighted, he thought he saw behind the curtain of the count's bedroom his father's pale face. Albert turned away his head with a sigh, and went to his own apartments. He cast one lingering look on all the luxuries which had rendered life so easy and so happy since his infancy; he looked at the pictures, whose faces seemed to smile, and the landscapes, which appeared painted in brighter colors. Then he took away his mother's portrait, with its oaken frame, leaving the gilt frame, from which he took it, black and empty. Then he arranged all his beautiful Turkish arms, his fine English guns, his Japanese china, his cups mounted in silver, his artistic bronzes, signed Feucheres or Barye; examined the cupboards and placed the key in each; threw into a drawer of his *secrétaire*, which he left open, all the pocket-money he had about him, and with it the thousand fancy jewels from his vases and his jewel-boxes, made an exact inventory of all, and placed it in the most conspicuous part of the table, after putting aside the books and papers which encumbered it.

At the commencement of this work his servant, notwithstanding his prohibition, came to his room.

"What do you want?" asked he, with a more sorrowful than angry tone.

"Pardon me, sir," replied the valet; "you had forbidden me to disturb you, but the Count de Morcerf had called me."

"Well?" said Albert.

"I did not like to go to him without first seeing you."

"Why?"

"Because the count is doubtless aware that I accompanied you to the meeting this morning."

"It is probable," said Albert.

"And since he has sent for me, it is doubtless to question me on what had happened there. What must I answer?"

"The truth."

"Then I shall say the duel did not take place?"

"You will say that I apologized to the Count of Monte-Cristo. Go!"

The valet bowed and retired and Albert returned to his inventory. As he was finishing this work, the sound of horses prancing in the yard, and the wheels of a carriage shaking his window attracted his attention; he approached the window, and saw his father get into it, and it drove away. The door was scarcely closed when Albert bent his steps to his mother's room; and no one being there to announce him, he advanced to her bedroom, and, distressed by what he saw and guessed, stopped for one moment at the door. As if the same soul had animated these two beings, Mercedes was doing the same in her apartments as he had just done. Everything was in order: laces, dresses, jewels, linen, money — all were arranged in the drawers, and the countess was carefully collecting the keys.

Albert saw all these preparations; he understood them, and exclaiming, "My mother!" he threw his arms around her neck.

The artist who could have depicted the expression of these two countenances would certainly have made of them a beautiful picture. All these proofs of an energetic resolution, which Albert did not fear on his own account, alarmed him for his mother.

"What are you doing?" asked he.

"What were you doing?" replied she.

"Oh! my mother," exclaimed Albert, so overcome he could scarcely speak; "it is not the same with you and me; you cannot have made the same resolution I have, for I am come to warn you that I bid adieu to your house and — and to you."

"I, also," replied Mercedes, "am going, and I acknowledge I had depended on your accompanying me; have I deceived myself?"



"My mother," said Albert, with firmness, "I cannot make you share the fate I have planned for myself. I must live henceforth without rank and fortune, and to begin this hard apprenticeship I must borrow from a friend the loaf I shall eat until I have earned one. So, my dear mother, I am going at once to ask Franz to lend me the small sum I shall require to supply my present wants."

"You, my poor child, suffer poverty and hunger? Oh! say not so; it will break my resolutions."

"But not mine, mother," replied Albert. "I am young and strong; I believe I am courageous, and since yesterday I have learned the power of will. Alas! my dear mother, some have suffered so much, and yet live, and have raised a new fortune on the ruin of all the promises of happiness which Heaven had made them — on the fragments of all the hope which God had given them! I have seen that, my mother; I know that from the gulf in which their enemies have plunged them they have risen with so much vigor and glory, that in their turn they have ruled their former conquerors, and have punished them. No, my mother, from this moment I have done with the past, and accept nothing from it; not even a name, because you can understand your son cannot bear the name of a man who ought to blush before another."

"Albert, my child," said Mercedes, "if I had a stronger heart, that is the counsel I would have given you. Your conscience has spoken when my voice became too weak; listen to its dictates. You had friends, Albert: break off their acquaintance, but do not despair. You have life before you, my dear Albert, for you are yet scarcely twenty-two years old; and as a pure heart like yours wants a spotless name, take my father's — it was Herrera. I am sure, my Albert, whatever be your career, you will soon render that name illustrious. Then, my friend, return to the world, still more brilliant from the

reflection of your former sorrows; and if I am wrong, still let me cherish these hopes, for I have no future to look forward to: for me the grave opens when I pass the threshold of this house."

"I will fulfill all your wishes, my dear mother," said the young man. "Yes, I share your hopes. The anger of Heaven will not pursue us, you so pure and me so innocent. But since our resolution is formed, let us act promptly. M. de Morcerf went out about half an hour since; the opportunity is favorable to avoid an explanation."

"I am ready, my son," said Mercedes.

Albert ran to fetch a hackney-coach; he recollected there was a small furnished house to let in the Rue des Saints-Pères, where his mother would find an humble but decent lodging; and thither he intended conducting the countess. As the hackney-coach stopped at the door, and Albert was alighting, a man approached and gave him a letter. Albert recognized the bearer.

"From the count," said Bertuccio.

Albert took the letter, opened it and read it; then looked around for Bertuccio, but he was gone. He returned to Mercedes with tears in his eyes and heaving breast, and, without uttering a word, he gave her the letter. Mercedes read:

"ALBERT: While showing you that I have discovered your plans, I hope also to convince you of my delicacy. You are free; you leave the count's hotel, and take your mother to your home; but reflect, Albert, you owe her more than your poor noble heart can pay her. Keep the struggle for yourself, bear all the suffering, but spare her the trial of poverty which must accompany your first efforts; for she deserves not even the shadow of the misfortune which has this day fallen on her, and Providence wills not the innocent should suffer for the guilty. I know you are going to leave the Rue du Helder without

taking anything with you; do not seek to know how I discovered it—I know it; that is sufficient. Now, listen, Albert. Twenty-four years ago I returned proud and joyful to my country. I had a betrothed, Albert, a lovely girl, whom I adored, and I was bringing to my betrothed a hundred and fifty louis, painfully amassed by ceaseless toil. This money was for her; I destined it for her, and knowing the treachery of the sea, I buried our treasure in the little garden of the house my father lived in at Marseilles, on the Allées de Meillan. Your mother, Albert, knows that poor house well. A short time since I passed through Marseilles, and went to see the old house, which revived so many painful recollections, and in the evening I took a spade and dug in the corner of the garden where I had concealed my treasure. The iron box was there, no one had touched it; it was under a beautiful fig-tree my father had planted the day I was born, which overshadowed the spot. Well, Albert, this money, which was formerly designed to promote the comfort and tranquillity of the woman I adored, may now, from a strange and painful circumstance, be devoted to the same purpose. Oh! feel for me, who could offer millions to that poor woman, but who return her only the piece of black bread, forgotten under my poor roof since the day I was torn from her I loved. You are a generous man, Albert, but perhaps you may be blinded by pride or resentment; if you refuse me, if you ask another for what I have a right to offer you, I will say it is ungenerous of you to refuse the life of your mother at the hands of a man whose father was allowed to die in all the horrors of poverty and despair by your father.”

Albert stood pale and motionless to hear what his mother would decide after she had finished reading this letter.

Mercedes turned her eyes with an ineffable look toward heaven.

"I accept it," said she; "he has a right to pay the dowry, which I shall take with me to some convent!"

Putting the letter in her bosom, she took her son's arm, and with a firmer step than she even herself expected, she went downstairs.

## CHAPTER XCII.

## THE SUICIDE.

MEANWHILE, Monte-Cristo had also returned to town with Emmanuel and Maximilian. Their return was cheerful. Emmanuel did not conceal his joy at having seen peace succeed to war, and acknowledged aloud his philanthropic tastes. Morrel, in a corner of the carriage, allowed his brother-in-law's gayety to expend itself in words, while he felt equal inward joy, which, however, betrayed itself only by his look. At the Barrière du Trône they met Bertuccio, who was waiting there motionless as a sentinel at his post. Monte-Cristo put his head out of the window, exchanged a few words with him in a low tone, and the steward disappeared.

"M. le comte," said Emmanuel, when they were at the end of the Place Royale, "put me down at my door, that my wife may not have a single moment of needless anxiety on my account or yours."

"If it were not ridiculous to make a display of our triumph, I would invite the count to our house; besides that, he doubtless has some trembling heart to comfort. So we will take leave of our friend, and let him hasten home."

"Stop a moment," said Monte-Cristo, "do not let me lose both my companions; return, Emmanuel, to your charming wife, and present my best compliments to her, and do you, Morrel, accompany me to the Champs Elysées."

"Willingly," said Maximilian; "particularly as I have business in that quarter."

"Shall we wait breakfast for you?" asked Emmanuel.

"No," replied the young man.

The door was closed, and the carriage proceeded.

"See what good fortune I brought you!" said Morrel, when he was alone with the count. "Have you not thought so?"

"Yes," said Monte-Cristo, "for that reason I wished to keep you near me."

"It is miraculous!" continued Morrel, answering his own thoughts.

"What?" said Monte-Cristo.

"What has just happened."

"Yes," said the count, "you are right—it is miraculous."

"For Albert is brave," resumed Morrel.

"Very brave," said Monte-Cristo; "I have seen him sleep with a sword suspended over his head."

"And I know he has fought two duels," said Morrel; "how can you reconcile that with his conduct this morning?"

"All owing to your influence," replied Monte-Cristo, smiling.

"It is well for Albert he is not in the army," said Morrel.

"Why?"

"An apology on the ground!" said the young captain, shaking his head.

"Come," said the count, mildly, "do not entertain the prejudices of ordinary men, Morrel! Acknowledge, if Albert is brave, he cannot be a coward; he must then have had some reason for acting as he did this morning, and confess that his conduct is more heroic than otherwise."

"Doubtless, doubtless," said Morrel; "but I shall say like the Spaniard, 'He has not been so brave to-day as he was yesterday.'"

"You will breakfast with me, will you not, Morrel?" said the count, to turn the conversation.

"No, I must leave you at ten o'clock."

"Your engagement was for breakfast, then?" said the count.

Morrel smiled, and shook his head.

"Still you must breakfast somewhere."

"But if I am not hungry?" said the young man.

"Oh!" said the count, "I only know two things which destroy the appetite: grief (and as I am happy to see you very cheerful, it is not that) and love. Now, after what you told me this morning of your heart, I may believe——"

"Well, count," replied Morrel, gaily, "I will not dispute it."

"But you will not make me your confidant, Maximilian?" said the count, in a tone which showed how gladly he would have been admitted to the secret.

"I showed you this morning I had a heart; did I not, count?"

Monte-Cristo only answered by extending his hand to the young man.

"Well," continued the latter, "since that heart is no longer with you in the Bois de Vincennes, it is elsewhere, and I must go and find it."

"Go," said the count, deliberately, "go, dear friend, but promise me, if you meet with any obstacle, to remember that I have some power in this world; that I am happy to use that power in the behalf of those I love, and that I love you, Morrel."

"I will remember it," said the young man, "as selfish children recollect their parents when they want their aid. When I need your assistance, and the moment may come, I will come to you, count."

"Well, I rely upon your promise. Farewell. Adieu, till we meet again."

They had arrived in the Champs Elysées. Monte-Cristo opened the carriage-door, Morrel sprung out on the pavement. Bertuccio was waiting on the steps. Morrel disap-

peared through the Avenue of Marigny, and Monte-Cristo hastened to join Bertuccio.

"Well?" asked he.

"She is going to leave her house," said the steward.

"And her son?"

"Florentin, his valet, thinks he is going to do the same."

"Come this way."

Monte-Cristo took Bertuccio into his cabinet, wrote the letter we have seen, and gave it to the steward.

"Go," said he, quickly. "*Apropos*, let Haydee be informed I am returned."

"Here I am," said the young girl, who, at the sound of the carriage, had run downstairs, and whose face was radiant with joy at seeing the count return safely.

Bertuccio left.

Every transport of a daughter finding a father, all the delight of a mistress seeing an adored lover, were felt by Haydee during the first moments of this meeting which she had so eagerly expected. Doubtless, although less evident, Monte-Cristo's joy was not less intense; joy to hearts which have suffered long is like dew on the ground after a long drought: both the heart and the ground absorb that beneficial moisture falling on them, and nothing is outwardly apparent.

Monte-Cristo was beginning to think, what he had not for a long time dared to believe, that there were two Mercedes in the world, and he might yet be happy. His eye, elate with happiness, was reading eagerly the moistened gaze of Haydee, when suddenly the door opened. The count knit his brow.

"M. de Morcerf!" said Baptistin, as if that name sufficed for his excuse.

In fact, the count's face brightened.

"Which," asked he, "the viscount or the count?"

"The count."

"Oh!" exclaimed Haydee, "is it not yet over?"



"I know not if it is finished, my beloved child," said Monte-Cristo, taking the young girl's hands; "but I do know you have nothing more to fear."

"But it is the wretched ——"

"That man cannot injure me, Haydee," said Monte-Cristo; "it was his son alone there was cause to fear."

"And what I have suffered," said the young girl, "you shall never know, my lord."

Monte-Cristo smiled.

"By my father's tomb!" said he, extending his hand over the head of the young girl, "I swear to you, Haydee, that if any misfortune happens, it will not be to me."

"I believe you, my lord, as implicitly as if God had spoken to me," said the young girl, presenting her forehead to him.

Monte-Cristo pressed on that pure, beautiful forehead a kiss, which made two hearts throb at once, the one violently, the other secretly.

"Oh!" murmured the count, "shall I then be permitted to love again? Ask M. de Morcerf into the drawing-room," said he to Baptistin, while he led the beautiful Greek girl to a private staircase.

We must explain this visit, which, although Monte-Cristo expected it, is unexpected to our readers.

While Mercedes, as we have said, was making a similar inventory of her property to Albert's, while she was arranging her jewels, shutting her drawers, collecting her keys, to leave everything in perfect order, she did not perceive a pale and sinister face at a glass door which threw light into the passage, from which everything could be both seen and heard. He who was thus looking, without being heard or seen, probably heard and saw all that passed in Madame de Morcerf's apartments.

From that glass door the pale-faced man went to the count's bedroom, and raised, with a contracted hand, the curtain of a window overlooking the courtyard. He re-

mained there ten minutes, motionless and dumb, listening to the beating of his own heart. For him those ten minutes were very long.

It was then that Albert, returned from his rendezvous, perceived his father watching for his arrival, behind a curtain, and turned aside. The count's eye expanded; he knew Albert had insulted the count dreadfully, and that, in every country in the world, such an insult would lead to a deadly duel. Albert returned safely — then the count was revenged.

An indescribable ray of joy illuminated that wretched countenance, like the last ray of the sun before it disappears behind a mass of clouds which appear more like a tomb than its couch.

But as we have said, he waited in vain for his son to come to his apartment with the account of his triumph. He easily understood why his son did not come to see him before he went to avenge his father's honor; but when that was done, why did not his son come and throw himself in his arms?

It was then, when the count could not see Albert, he sent for his servant, who knew he was authorized not to conceal anything from him. Ten minutes afterward, General Morcerf was seen on the steps in a black coat with a military collar, black pantaloons, and black gloves. He had apparently given previous orders; for, as he reached the bottom step, his carriage came from the coach-house ready for him. The valet threw into the carriage his military cloak, in which two swords were wrapped; and shutting the door, he took his seat by the side of the coachman.

The coachman stooped down for his orders.

"To the Champs Elysées," said the general; "the Count of Monte-Cristo's. Quickly!"

The horses bounded beneath the whip, and in five minutes they stopped before the count's door. M. de Morcerf opened the door himself, and as the carriage rolled away,

he passed up the walk, rang, and entered the open door with his servant.

A moment afterwards, Baptistin announced the Count de Morcerf to M. de Monte-Cristo; and the latter, leading Haydee aside, ordered the Count de Morcerf to be asked into the drawing-room. The general was pacing the room the third time, when, in turning, he perceived Monte-Cristo at the door.

"Eh! it is M. de Morcerf," said Monte-Cristo, quietly; "I thought I had heard wrongly."

"Yes, it is I," said the count, whom a frightful contraction of the lips prevented from articulating freely.

"May I know the cause which procures me the pleasure of seeing M. de Morcerf so early?"

"Had you not a meeting with my son this morning?" asked the general.

"I had," replied the count.

"And I know my son had good reasons to wish to fight with you, and to endeavor to kill you."

"Yes, sir, he had very good ones; but you see, in spite of them, he has not killed me, and did not even fight."

"Yet he considered you the cause of his father's dishonor, the cause of the fearful ruin which has fallen on my house."

"Truly, sir," said Monte-Cristo with his dreadful calmness, "a secondary cause, but not the principal."

"Doubtless you made, then, some apology or explanation?"

"I explained nothing, and it is he who apologized to me."

"But to what do you attribute this conduct?"

"To the conviction, probably, that there was one more guilty than I."

"And who was that?"

"His father."

"That may be," said the count, turning pale; "but you know the guilty do not like to find themselves convicted."

"I know it. And I expected this result."

"You expected my son would be a coward!" cried the count.

"M. Albert de Morcerf is no coward!" said Monte-Cristo.

"A man who holds a sword in his hand, and sees a mortal enemy within reach of that sword, and does not fight, is a coward! Why is he not here, that I may tell him so?"

"Sir," replied Monte-Cristo, coldly, "I did not expect you had come here to relate to me your little family affairs. Go and tell M. Albert that, and he may know what to answer you."

"Oh, no, no!" said the general, smiling faintly, "I did not come for that purpose; you are right! I came to tell you that I also look upon you as my enemy! I came to tell you I hate you instinctively! That it seems as if I had always known you, and always hated you; and, in short, since the young people of the present day will not fight, it remains for us to do it. Do you think so, sir?"

"Certainly; and when I told you I had foreseen the result, it is the honor of your visit I alluded to."

"So much the better. Are you prepared?"

"Yes, sir."

"You know that we shall fight till one of us is dead!" said the general, whose teeth were clinched with rage.

"Until one of us dies," repeated Monte-Cristo, moving his head slightly up and down.

"Let us start, then; we need no witnesses."

"Truly," said Monte-Cristo, "it is unnecessary, we know each other so well!"

"On the contrary," said the count, "we know so little of each other."

"Indeed!" said Monte-Cristo, with the same indomitable coolness; "let us see. Are you not the soldier Fernand, who deserted on the eve of the battle of Waterloo? Are you not the Lieutenant Fernand, who served as guide and

spy to the French army in Spain? Are you not the Captain Fernand, who betrayed, sold, and murdered his benefactor, Ali? And have not all these Fernands united made the Lieutenant-General Count de Morcerf, peer of France?"

"Oh!" cried the general, as if branded with a hot iron, "wretch! to reproach me with my shame, when about, perhaps, to kill me! No, I do not say I was a stranger to you; I know well, demon, that you have penetrated into the darkness of the past, and that you have read, by the light of what flambeau I know not, every page of my life; but perhaps I may be more honorable in my shame than you under your pompous coverings. No — no, I am aware you know me, but I know you not, adventurer, sewn up in gold and jewelry. You have called yourself, at Paris, the Count of Monte-Cristo; in Italy, Sinbad the Sailor; in Malta, I forget what. But it is your real name I want to know, in the midst of your hundred names, that I may pronounce it when we meet to fight, at the moment when I plunge my sword through your heart."

The Count of Monte-Cristo turned dreadfully pale; his eye seemed to burn with a devouring fire. He bounded towards a dressing-room near his bedroom, and in less than a moment, tearing off his cravat, his coat, and waistcoat, he put on a sailor's jacket and hat, and from beneath which rolled his long black hair. He returned thus, formidable and implacable, advancing, with his arms crossed on his breast, towards the general, who could not understand why he had disappeared; but who, on seeing him again, and feeling his teeth chatter, and his legs sink under him, drew back and only stopped when he found a table to support his clinched hand.

"Fernand!" cried he, "of my hundred names I need only tell you one to overwhelm you! but you guess it now, do you not? — or, rather, you remember it? For, notwithstanding all my sorrows and my tortures, I show you to-day a face which the happiness of revenge makes young

again — a face you must often have seen in your dreams since your marriage with Mercedes, my betrothed!”

The general, with his head thrown back, hands extended, gaze fixed, looked silently at this dreadful apparition; then, seeking the wall to support him, he glided along close to it until he reached the door, through which he went backwards, uttering this single, mournful, lamentable, distressing cry :

“Edmond Dantes!”

Then, with sighs which were unlike any human sound, he dragged himself to the door, reeled across the courtyard, and falling into the arms of his valet, he said, in a voice, scarcely intelligible:

“Home! home!”

The fresh air, and the shame he felt at having exposed himself before his servants, partially recalled his senses; but the ride was short, and as he drew near his house all his wretchedness revived. He stopped at a short distance from the house and alighted. The door of the hotel was wide open, a hackney-coach was standing in the middle of the yard — a strange sight before so noble a mansion. The count looked at it with terror, but without daring to ask, he rushed towards his apartment. Two persons were coming down the stairs; he had only time to creep into a cabinet to avoid them. It was Mercedes leaning on her son’s arm and leaving the hotel. They passed close to the unhappy being, who, concealed behind the damask door, almost felt Mercedes’s dress brush past him, and his son’s warm breath pronouncing these words:

“Courage, my mother! Come, this is no longer our home!”

The words died away, the steps were lost in the distance. The general drew himself up, clinging to the door. He uttered the most dreadful sob which ever escaped from the bosom of a father abandoned at the same time by his wife and son. He soon heard the clattering of the iron step of the hackney-coach, then the coachman’s voice, and

then the rolling of the heavy vehicle shook the windows. He darted to his bedroom to see once more all he had loved in the world ; but the hackney-coach drove on without the head of either Mercedes or her son appearing at the window to take a last look at the house or the deserted father or husband. And at the very moment when the wheels of that coach crossed the gateway, a report was heard, and a thick smoke escaped through one of the panes of the window, which was broken by the explosion.

## CHAPTER XCIII.

## VALENTINE.

WE may easily conceive where Morrel's appointment was. On leaving Monte-Cristo, he walked slowly towards Villefort's. We say slowly, for Morrel had more than half an hour to spare to go five hundred steps; but he had hastened to take leave of Monte-Cristo because he wished to be alone with his thoughts. He knew his time well—the hour when Valentine was giving Noirtier his breakfast, and was sure not to be disturbed in the performance of this pious duty. Noirtier and Valentine had given him leave to go twice a week, and he was now availing himself of that permission.

He arrived: Valentine was expecting him. Uneasy and almost wandering, she seized his hand and led him to her grandfather. This uneasiness, amounting almost to wildness, arose from the report Morcerf's adventure had made in the world. The affair at the opera was generally known; no one at Villefort's doubted that a duel would ensue from it. Valentine, with her woman's instinct, guessed that Morrel would be Monte-Cristo's witness, and from the young man's well-known courage and his great affection for the count, she feared he would not content himself with the passive part assigned to him.

We may easily understand how eagerly the particulars were asked for, given, and received; and Morrel could read an indescribable joy in the eyes of his beloved, when she knew that the termination of this affair was as happy as it was unexpected.

"Now," said Valentine, motioning to Morrel to sit down



near her grandfather, while she took her seat on his footstool, "now let us talk about our own affairs. You know, Maximilian, grandpapa once thought of leaving this house, and taking an apartment away from M. de Villefort's."

"Yes," said Maximilian, "I recollect this project, of which I highly approved."

"Well," said Valentine, "you may approve again, for grandpapa is again thinking of it."

"Bravo!" said Maximilian.

"And do you know," said Valentine, "what reason grandpapa gives for leaving this house?"

Noirtier looked at Valentine to impose silence, but she did not notice him; her looks, her eyes, her smile were all for Morrel.

"Oh, whatever may be M. Noirtier's reason," answered Morrel, "I will readily believe it to be a good one."

"An excellent one," said Valentine. "He pretends the air of the Faubourg St. Honore is not good for me."

"Indeed!" said Morrel; "in that M. Noirtier may be right; your health has not appeared good the last fortnight."

"Not very," said Valentine. "And grandpapa is become my physician; and I have the greatest confidence in him, because he knows everything."

"Do you then really suffer?" asked Morrel, quickly.

"Oh, it must not be called suffering; I feel a general uneasiness, that is all. I have lost my appetite, and my stomach feels to be struggling to become accustomed to something."

Noirtier did not lose a word of what Valentine said.

"And what treatment do you adopt for this singular complaint?"

"A very simple one," said Valentine. "I swallow every morning a spoonful of the mixture prepared for my grandfather. When I say one spoonful, I began by one; now I take four. Grandpapa says it is a panacea."

Valentine smiled, but it was evident she suffered.

Maximilian, in his devotedness, gazed silently at her. She was very beautiful, but her usual paleness had increased; her eyes were more brilliant than ever, and her hands, which were generally white like mother-of-pearl, now more resembled wax to which time was adding a yellowish hue. From Valentine the young man looked towards Noirtier. The latter watched with strange and deep interest the young girl, absorbed by her affection; and he also, like Morrel, followed those traces of inward suffering which were so little perceptible to a common observer—they escaped the notice of every one but the grandfather and the lover.

“But,” said Morrel, “I thought this mixture, of which you now take four spoonfuls, was prepared for M. Noirtier?”

“I know it is very bitter,” said Valentine; “so bitter, that all I drink afterwards appears to have the same taste.”

Noirtier looked inquiringly at his granddaughter.

“Yes, grandpapa,” said Valentine, “it is so. Just now, before I came down to you, I drank a glass of *eau sucrée*; I left half, because it seemed so bitter.”

Noirtier turned pale and made a sign that he wished to speak. Valentine rose to fetch the dictionary. Noirtier watched her with evident anguish. In fact the blood was rushing to the young girl’s head already; her cheeks were becoming red.

“Oh!” cried she, without losing any of her cheerfulness, “this is singular! A dimness! Did the sun shine in my eyes?” And she leaned against the window.

“The sun is not shining,” said Morrel, more alarmed by Noirtier’s expression than by Valentine’s indisposition. He ran towards her. The young girl smiled.

“Comfort yourself!” said she to Noirtier. “Do not be alarmed, Maximilian; it is nothing, and has already passed away. But listen! Do I not hear a carriage in the courtyard?” She opened Noirtier’s door, ran to a window in

the passage, and returned hastily. "Yes," said she, "it is Madame Danglars and her daughter, who are come to call on us. Good-bye! I must run away, for they would send here for me; or rather, farewell till I see you again. Stay with grandpapa, Maximilian; I promise you not to persuade them to stay."

Morrel watched her as she left the room; he heard her ascend the little staircase which led both to Madame de Villefort's apartments and to hers. As soon as she was gone, Noirtier made a sign to Morrel to take the dictionary. Morrel obeyed: guided by Valentine, he had learned how to understand the old man quickly. Accustomed, however, as he was, and having to repeat most of the letters of the alphabet, and to find every word in the dictionary, it was ten minutes before the thought of the old man was translated by these words, "Fetch the glass of water and the decanter from Valentine's room."

Morrel rang immediately for the servant who had taken Barrois's situation, and in Noirtier's name gave that order. The servant soon returned. The decanter and the glass were completely empty. Noirtier made a sign that he wished to speak.

"Why are the glass and decanter empty?" asked he. "Valentine said she only drank half the glassful."

The translation of this new question occupied another five minutes.

"I do not know," said the servant. "But the housemaid is in Mademoiselle Valentine's room; perhaps she has emptied them!"

"Ask her!" said Morrel, translating Noirtier's thought this time by his look.

The servant went out, but returned almost immediately.

"Mademoiselle Valentine passed through the room to go to Madame de Villefort's," said he; "and in passing, as she was thirsty, she drank what remained in the glass; as for the decanter, M. Edward had emptied that to make a pond for his ducks."

Noirtier raised his eyes to heaven as a gambler does who stakes his all on one stroke. From that moment the old man's eyes were fixed on the door and did not quit it.

It was indeed Madame Danglars and her daughter whom Valentine had seen; they had been ushered into Madame de Villefort's room, who had said she would receive them there. That is why Valentine passed through her room, which was on a level with Valentine's, and only separated from it by Edward's.

The two ladies entered the drawing-room with that sort of official stiffness which announced a communication. Between worldly people a shadow is soon caught. Madame de Villefort received them with equal solemnity. Valentine entered at this moment, and the formalities were resumed.

"My dear friend," said the countess, while the two young people were shaking hands, "I and Eugenie are come to be the first to announce to you the approaching marriage of my daughter with Prince Cavalcanti."

Danglars kept up the title of prince. The popular banker found it answered better than count.

"Allow me to present my sincere congratulations," replied Madame de Villefort. "Prince Cavalcanti appears a young man of rare qualities."

"Listen," said the countess, smiling; "speaking to you as a friend, I would say the prince does not yet appear all he will be. He has about him a little of that foreign manner by which French persons recognize at first sight the Italian or German nobleman. Besides, he gives evidence of great kindness of disposition, much keenness of wit, and, as to suitableness, M. Danglars assures me his fortune is majestic — that is his term."

"And then," said Eugenie, while turning over the leaves of Madame de Villefort's album, "add that you have taken a great fancy to the young man."

"And," said Madame de Villefort, "I need not ask you if you share that fancy."

"I!" replied Eugenie, with her usual candor. "Oh, not the least in the world, madame! My wish was not to confine myself to domestic cares or the caprices of any man, but to be an artist, and, consequently, free in heart, in person, and in thought."

Eugenie pronounced these words with so firm a tone that the color mounted to Valentine's cheeks. The timid girl could not understand that vigorous nature, which appeared to have none of the timidities of woman.

"At any rate," said she, "since I am to be married whether I will or not, I ought to be thankful to Providence for having released me from my engagement with M. Albert de Morcerf, or I should this day have been the wife of a dishonored man."

"It is true," said the countess, with that strange simplicity sometimes met with among fashionable ladies, and of which plebeian intercourse can never entirely deprive them — "it is very true that, had not the Morcerfs hesitated, my daughter would have married that M. Albert. The general depended much on it; he even came to force M. Danglars. We have had a narrow escape."

"But," said Valentine, timidly, "does all the father's shame revert upon the son? M. Albert appears to me quite innocent of the treason charged against the general."

"Excuse me," said the implacable young girl; "M. Albert claims and well deserves his share. It appears that, after having challenged M. de Monte-Cristo at the opera yesterday, he apologized on the ground to-day."

"Impossible!" said Madame de Villefort.

"Ah, my dear friend," said Madame Danglars, with the same simplicity we before noticed, "it is a fact! I heard it from M. Debray, who was present at the explanation."

Valentine also knew the truth, but she did not answer. A single word had reminded her that Morrel was expecting her in M. Noirtier's room. Deeply engaged with a sort of inward contemplation, Valentine had ceased for a moment to join in the conversation. She would, indeed, have found

it impossible to repeat what had been said the last few minutes, when suddenly Madame Danglars's hand, pressed on her arm, aroused her from her lethargy.

"What is it?" said she, starting at Madame Danglars's touch as she would have done from an electric shock.

"It is, my dear Valentine," said the baroness, "that you are, doubtless, suffering."

"I?" said the young girl, passing her hand across her burning forehead.

"Yes; look at yourself in that glass; you have turned pale and red successively, three or four times in one minute."

"Indeed," cried Eugenie, "you are very pale."

"Oh, do not be alarmed! I have been so for some days."

Artless as she was, the young girl knew this was an opportunity to leave; besides, Madame de Villefort came to her assistance.

"Retire, Valentine," said she; "you are really suffering, and these ladies will excuse you; drink a glass of pure water: it will restore you."

Valentine kissed Eugenie, bowed to Madame Danglars, who had already risen to take her leave, and went out.

"That poor child," said Madame de Villefort when Valentine was gone, "she makes me very uneasy, and I should not be astonished if she had some serious illness."

Meanwhile, Valentine, in a sort of excitement which she could not quite understand, had crossed Edward's room without noticing some trick of the child's, and through her own had reached the little staircase. She was at the bottom excepting three steps; she already heard Morrel's voice, when suddenly a cloud passed over her eyes, her stiffened foot missed the step, her hands had no power to hold the baluster, and falling against the wall, she rolled down these three steps rather than walked. Morrel bounded to the door, opened it, and found Valentine extended on the floor. Rapid as lightning, he raised her in

his arms and placed her in a chair. Valentine opened her eyes.

"Oh, what a clumsy thing I am!" said she, with a feverish volubility; "I no longer know my way. I forgot there were three more steps before the landing."

"You have hurt yourself, perhaps," said Morrel. "What can I do for you, Valentine?"

Valentine looked around her; she saw the deepest terror depicted in Noirtier's eyes.

"Comfort yourself, dear grandpapa," said she, endeavoring to smile; "it is nothing — it is nothing; I was giddy, that is all."

"Another giddiness!" said Morrel, clasping his hands. "Oh, attend to it, Valentine, I entreat you!"

"But no," said Valentine — "no, I tell you it is all past, and it was nothing. Now, let me tell you some news: Eugenie is to be married in a week, and in three days there is to be a grand feast, a sort of betrothing festival. We are all invited, my father, Madame de Villefort, and I — at least I understood it so."

"When will it, then, be our turn to think of these things? Oh, Valentine, you who have so much influence over your grandpapa, try to make him answer — soon!"

"And do you," said Valentine, "depend on me to stimulate the tardiness and arouse the memory of grandpapa?"

"Yes," cried Morrel, "be quick! So long as you are not mine, Valentine, I shall always think I may lose you."

"Oh!" replied Valentine, with a convulsive movement — "Oh! indeed, Maximilian, you are too timid for an officer, for a soldier, who, they say, never knows fear. Ah! ah! ah!"

She burst into a forced and melancholy laugh, her arms stiffened and twisted, her head fell back on her chair, and she remained motionless. The cry of terror which was stopped on Noirtier's lips, seemed to start from his eyes. Morrel understood it — he knew he must call assistance. The young man rang the bell violently; the housemaid

who had been in Mademoiselle Valentine's room and the servant who had replaced Barrois ran in at the same moment. Valentine was so pale, so cold, so inanimate, that, without listening to what was said to them, they were seized with the fear which pervaded that house, and they flew into the passage, crying for help. Madame Danglars and Eugenie were going out at that moment; they heard the cause of the disturbance.

"I told you so!" cried Madame de Villefort. "Poor child!"



## CHAPTER XCIV.

## THE CONFESSION.

AT the same moment M. de Villefort's voice was heard calling from his cabinet, "What is the matter?" Morrel consulted Noirtier's look, who had recovered his self-command, and with a glance indicated the closet where once before, under somewhat similar circumstances, he had taken refuge. He had only time to get his hat, and throw himself breathless into the closet; the procureur's footstep was heard in the passage. Villefort sprang into the room, ran to Valentine, and took her in his arms.

"A physician! a physician! M. d'Avrigny!" cried Villefort; "or rather I will go for him myself."

He flew from the apartment, and Morrel, at the same moment, darted out at the other door.

He had been struck to the heart by a frightful recollection — the conversation he had heard between the doctor and Villefort the night of Madame de Saint-Meran's death recurred to him; these symptoms, to a less alarming extent, were the same which had preceded the death of Barrois. At the same time Monte-Cristo's voice seemed to resound in his ear, who had said only two hours before, "Whatever you want, Morrel, come to me, I have great power." More rapidly than thought he darted down the Rue Matignon, and thence to the Avenue des Champs Elysées.

Meanwhile, M. de Villefort arrived in a hired cabriolet at M. d'Avrigny's door. He rang so violently, that the porter came alarmed. Villefort ran upstairs without saying a word. The porter knew him, and let him pass, only saying to him :

"In his cabinet, M. le procureur du roi — in his cabinet!"

Villefort pushed, or rather forced, the door open.

"Ah!" said the doctor, "is it you?"

"Yes," said Villefort, closing the door after him, "it is I, who am come in my turn to ask you if we are quite alone. Doctor, my house is accursed!"

"What!" said the latter, with apparent coolness, but with deep emotion, "have you another invalid?"

"Yes, doctor," cried Villefort, seizing with a convulsive grasp a handful of hair — "yes."

D'Avrigny's look implied, "I told you it would be so." Then he slowly uttered these words, "Who is now dying in your house? What new victim is going to accuse you of weakness before God?"

A mournful sob broke from Villefort's heart; he approached the doctor, and, seizing his arm:

"Valentine!" said he; "it is Valentine's turn!"

"Your daughter!" cried D'Avrigny, with grief and surprise.

"You see you were deceived," murmured the magistrate; "come and see her, and on her bed of agony entreat her pardon for having suspected her."

"Each time you have applied to me," said the doctor, "it has been too late; still I will go. But let us make haste, sir; with the enemies you have to do with there is no time to be lost."

"Ah! this time, doctor, you shall not have to reproach me with weakness. This time I will know the assassin, and will pursue him."

"Let us try first to save the victim before we think of revenging her," said D'Avrigny. "Come."

The same cabriolet which had brought Villefort took them back at full speed, at the same moment when Morrel rapped at Monte-Cristo's door.

The count was in his cabinet, and was reading, with an angry look, something which Bertuccio had brought in

haste. Hearing Morrel announced, who had only left him two hours before, the count raised his head. He, as well as the count, had evidently been much tried during those two hours, for he had left him smiling, and returned with a disturbed air. The count rose, and sprang to meet him.

"What is the matter, Maximilian?" asked he; "you are pale, and the perspiration rolls from your forehead."

Morrel fell, rather than sat, down on a chair.

"Yes," said he, "I came quickly; I wanted to speak to you."

"Is all your family well?" asked the count, with an affectionate benevolence, whose sincerity no one could for a moment doubt.

"Thank you, count—thank you," said the young man, evidently embarrassed how to begin the conversation; "yes, every one in my family is well."

"So much the better; yet you have something to tell me?" replied the count, with increased anxiety.

"Yes," said Morrel, "it is true; I have just left a house where death has entered, to run to you."

"Are you, then, come from M. de Morcerf's?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"No," said Morrel; "is some one dead in his house?"

"The general has just blown his brains out," replied Monte-Cristo, with great coolness.

"Oh! what a dreadful event!" cried Maximilian.

"Not for the countess, nor for Albert," said Monte-Cristo; "a dead father or husband is better than a dishonored one: blood washes out shame."

"Poor countess!" said Maximilian, "I pity her very much; she is so noble a woman!"

"Pity Albert also, Maximilian; for, believe me, he is the worthy son of the countess. But let us return to yourself; you have hastened to me; can I have the happiness of being useful to you?"

"Yes, I need your help; that is, I thought, like a mad-

man, you could lend me your assistance in a case where God alone can succor me."

"Tell me what it is," replied Monte-Cristo.

"Oh!" said Morrel, "I know not, indeed, if I may reveal this secret to mortal ears; but fatality impels me, necessity constrains me, count——"

Morrel hesitated.

"Do you think I love you?" said Monte-Cristo, taking the young man's hand affectionately in his.

"Ah! you encourage me! and something tells me there" (placing his hand on his heart) "that I ought to have no secret from you."

"You are right, Morrel; God is speaking to your heart, and your heart speaks to you. Tell me what it says."

"Count, will you allow me to see Baptistin to inquire after some one you know?"

"I am at your service, and still more my servants."

"Oh! I cannot live if she is not better."

"Shall I ring for Baptistin?"

"No, I will go and speak to him myself."

Morrel went out, called Baptistin, and whispered a few words to him. The valet ran directly.

"Well, have you sent?" asked Monte-Cristo, seeing Morrel return.

"Yes, and now I shall be more calm."

"You know I am waiting," said Monte-Cristo, smiling.

"Yes, and I will tell you. One evening I was in a garden; a clump of trees concealed me; no one suspected I was there. Two persons passed near me—allow me to conceal their names for the present; they were speaking in an undertone, and yet I was so interested in what they said I did not lose a single word."

"This is a gloomy introduction, if I may judge from your paleness and shuddering, Morrel."

"Oh, yes, very gloomy, my friend! Some one had just died in the house to which the garden belonged. One of those persons whose conversation I overheard was the

master of the house, the other the physician. The former was confiding to the latter his grief and fear; for it was the second time within a month that death had entered suddenly and unexpectedly that house, apparently destined to destruction by some exterminating angel, as an object of God's anger."

"Ah! ah!" said Monte-Cristo, looking earnestly at the young man, and, by an imperceptible movement, turning his chair so that he remained in the shade while the light fell full on Maximilian's face.

"Yes," continued Morrel, "death had entered that house twice within one month."

"And what did the doctor answer?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"He replied — he replied, that the death was not a natural one, and must be attributed ——"

"To what?"

"To poison!"

"Indeed!" said Monte-Cristo, with a slight cough, which, in moments of extreme emotion, helped him to disguise a blush, or his paleness, or the intense interest with which he listened; "indeed, Maximilian, did you hear that?"

"Yes, my dear count, I heard it; and the doctor added, that if another death occurred in a similar way he must appeal to justice."

Monte-Cristo listened, or appeared to do so, with the greatest calmness.

"Well," said Maximilian, "death came a third time, and neither the master of the house nor the doctor said a word. Death is now, perhaps, striking a fourth blow. Count, what am I bound to do, being in possession of this secret?"

"My dear friend," said Monte-Cristo, "you appear to be relating an adventure which we all know by heart. I know the house where you heard it, or one very similar to it; a house with a garden, a master, a physician, and

where there have been three unexpected and sudden deaths. Well, I have not intercepted your confidence, and yet I know all that as well as you, and I have no conscientious scruples. No! it does not concern me. You say an exterminating angel appears to have devoted that house to God's anger — well, who says your supposition is not reality? Do not notice things which those whose interest it is to see them pass over. If it is God's justice, instead of his anger, which is walking through that house, Maximilian, turn away your face, and let his justice accomplish its purpose."

Morrel shuddered. There was something mournful, solemn, and terrible in the count's manner.

"Besides," continued he, in so changed a tone that no one would have supposed it was the same person speaking — "besides, who says that it will begin again?"

"It has returned, count!" exclaimed Morrel; "that is why I hastened to you."

"Well, what do you wish me to do? Do you wish me, for instance, to give information to the procureur du roi?"

Monte-Cristo uttered the last words with so much meaning, that Morrel, starting up, cried out:

"You know of whom I speak, count, do you not?"

"Perfectly well, my good friend, and I will prove it to you by putting the dots to the *i*, or, rather, by naming the persons. You were walking one evening in M. de Villefort's garden: from what you relate, I suppose it to have been the evening of Madame de Saint-Meran's death. You heard M. de Villefort talking to M. d'Avrigny about the death of M. de Saint-Meran, and that, no less surprising, of the countess. M. d'Avrigny said he believed they both proceeded from poison: and you, honest man, have ever since been asking your heart, and sounding your conscience to know if you ought to expose or conceal this secret. Why do you torment them? 'Conscience, what hast thou to do with me?' as Sterne said. My dear fellow, let them

sleep on, if they are asleep; let them grow pale in their drowsiness, if they are disposed to do so; and pray do you remain in peace, who have no remorse to disturb you."

Deep grief was depicted on Morrel's features; he seized Monte-Cristo's hand.

"But it is beginning again, I say!"

"Well!" said the count, astonished at his perseverance, which he could not understand, and looking still more earnestly at Maximilian, "let it begin again: it is a family of Atrides; God has condemned them, and they must submit to their punishment. They will all disappear like the fabrics children build with cards, and which fall, one by one, under the breath of their builder, even if there are two hundred of them. Three months since, it was M. de Saint-Meran; Madame de Saint-Meran two months since; the other day it was Barrois; to-day, the old Noirtier or young Valentine."

"You knew it?" cried Morrel, in such a paroxysm of terror that Monte-Cristo started, he whom the falling heavens would have found unmoved; "you knew it, and said nothing?"

"And what is it to me?" replied Monte-Cristo, shrugging his shoulders. "Do I know those people? and must I lose the one to save the other? Faith, no, for between the culprit and the victim I have no choice."

"But I," cried Morrel, groaning with sorrow — "I love her!"

"You love! — whom?" cried Monte-Cristo, starting on his feet and seizing the two hands which Morrel was raising towards heaven.

"I love most fondly — I love madly — I love as a man who would give his life-blood to spare her a tear — I love Valentine de Villefort, who is being murdered at this moment! Do you understand me? I love her; and I ask God and you how I can save her!"

Monte-Cristo uttered a cry, which those only can conceive who have heard the roar of a wounded lion.

"Unhappy man!" cried he, wringing his hands in his turn; "you love Valentine! — the daughter of an accursed race!"

Never had Morrel witnessed such an expression — never had so terrible an eye flashed before his face — never had the genius of terror he had so often seen, either on the battle-field or in the murderous nights of Algeria, shaken around him more dreadful fires. He drew back terrified.

As for Monte-Cristo, after this ebullition, he closed his eyes, as if dazzled by internal light. In a moment he restrained himself so powerfully that the tempestuous heaving of his breast subsided, as turbulent and foaming waves yield to the sun's genial influence when the cloud has passed. This silence, self-control, and struggle lasted about twenty seconds, then the count raised his pallid face.

"See," said he, "my dear friend, how God punishes the most thoughtless and unfeeling men for their indifference, by presenting dreadful scenes to their view. I, who was looking on, an eager and curious spectator — I, who was watching the working of this mournful tragedy — I, who, like a wicked angel, was laughing at the evil men committed, protected by secrecy (a secret is easily kept by the rich and powerful) — I am, in my turn, bitten by the serpent whose tortuous course I was watching, and bitten to the heart!"

Morrel groaned.

"Come, come," continued the count, "complaints are unavailing; be a man, be strong, be full of hope, for I am here, and will watch over you."

Morrel shook his head sorrowfully.

"I tell you to hope. Do you understand me?" cried Monte-Cristo. "Remember that I never utter a falsehood, and am never deceived. It is twelve o'clock, Maximilian; thank Heaven that you came at noon rather than in the evening or to-morrow morning! Listen, Morrel, — it is noon: if Valentine is not now dead, she will not die."



"How so?" cried Morrel, "when I left her dying?"

Monte-Cristo pressed his hand to his forehead. What was passing in that brain, so loaded with dreadful secrets? What does the angel of light, or the angel of darkness, say to that mind at once implacable and generous? God only knows!

Monte-Cristo raised his head once more; and this time he was calm as a child awaking from its sleep.

"Maximilian," said he, "return home. I command you not to stir — attempt nothing; not to let your countenance betray a thought, and I will send you tidings. Go!"

"Oh, count, you overwhelm me with that coolness. Have you, then, power against death? Are you superhuman? Are you an angel?"

And the young man, who had never shrunk from danger, shrank before Monte-Cristo with indescribable terror. But Monte-Cristo looked at him with so melancholy and sweet a smile that Maximilian felt the tears filling his eyes.

"I can do much for you, my friend," replied the count. "Go! I must be alone."

Morrel, subdued by the extraordinary ascendancy Monte-Cristo exercised over everything around him, did not endeavor to resist it. He pressed the count's hand and left. He stopped one moment at the door for Baptistin, whom he saw in the Rue Matignon, and who was running.

Meanwhile, Villefort and D'Avrigny had made all possible haste. Valentine had not revived from her fainting fit on their arrival, and the doctor examined the invalid with all the care the circumstances demanded, and with an interest which the knowledge of the secret doubled.

Villefort, closely watching his countenance and his lips, waited the result of the examination. Noirtier, paler even than the young girl, more eager than even Villefort for the decision, was watching almost intently and affectionately. At last D'Avrigny slowly uttered these words:

"She is still alive!"

"Still?" cried Villefort, "oh! doctor, what a dreadful word is that!"

"Yes," said the physician, "I repeat it; she is still alive, and I am astonished at it."

"But is she safe?" asked the father.

"Yes, since she lives."

At that moment D'Avrigny's glance met Noirtier's eye. It glistened with such extraordinary joy, so rich and full of thought, that the physician was struck. He placed the young girl again on the chair,—her lips were scarcely discernible, they were so pale and white, as well as her whole face,—and remained motionless, looking at Noirtier, who appeared to anticipate and commend all he did.

"Sir," said D'Avrigny to Villefort, "call Mademoiselle Valentine's maid, if you please."

Villefort went himself to find her, and D'Avrigny approached Noirtier.

"Have you something to tell me?" asked he.

The old man winked his eye expressively, which we may remember was his only way of expressing his approval.

"Privately?"

"Yes," said Noirtier.

"Well; I will remain with you."

At this moment Villefort returned, followed by the lady's maid; and after her came Madame de Villefort.

"What is the matter, then, with this dear child? she had just left me, and she complained of feeling unwell; but I did not think seriously of it."

The young woman with tears in her eyes and every mark of affection of a true mother, approached Valentine and took her hand.

D'Avrigny continued to look at Noirtier; he saw the eyes of the old man dilate and become round, his cheeks turn pale and tremble; the perspiration stood in drops upon his forehead.

"Ah!" said he, involuntarily following Noirtier's eyes, which were fixed on Madame de Villefort, who repeated:

"This poor child would be better in bed. Come, Fanny, we will put her in."

M. d'Avrigny, who saw that would be a means of his remaining alone with Noirtier, expressed his opinion that it was the best thing that could be done; but he forbade anything being given to her except what he ordered.

They carried Valentine away; she had revived, but could scarcely move or speak, so shaken was her frame by the attack. She had, however, just power to give her grandfather one parting look, who, in losing her, seemed to be resigning his very soul. D'Avrigny followed the invalid, wrote a prescription, ordered Villefort to take a cabriolet, go in person to a chemist's to get the prescribed medicine, bring it himself, and wait for him in his daughter's room. Then, having renewed his injunction not to give Valentine anything, he went down again to Noirtier, shut the doors carefully, and after convincing himself no one was listening:

"Do you," said he, "know anything of this young lady's illness?"

"Yes," said the old man.

"We have no time to lose; I will question, and do you answer me."

Noirtier made a sign that he was ready to answer.

"Did you anticipate the accident which has happened to your granddaughter?"

"Yes."

D'Avrigny reflected a moment; then approaching Noirtier:

"Pardon what I am going to say," added he, "but no indication should be neglected in this terrible situation. Did you see poor Barrois die?"

Noirtier raised his eyes to heaven.

"Do you know of what he died?" asked D'Avrigny, placing his hand on Noirtier's shoulder.

"Yes," replied the old man.

"Do you think he died a natural death?"

A sort of smile was discernible on the lips of Noirtier,

"Then you thought Barrois was poisoned?"

"Yes."

"Do you think the poison he fell a victim to was intended for him?"

"No."

"Do you think the same hand which unintentionally struck Barrois has now attacked Valentine?"

"Yes."

"Then will she die, too?" asked D'Avrigny, fixing his penetrating gaze on Noirtier.

He watched the effect of this question on the old man.

"No," replied he, with an air of triumph, which would have puzzled the most clever diviner.

"Then you hope?" said D'Avrigny, with surprise.

"Yes."

"What do you hope?"

The old man made him understand that he could not answer.

"Ah! yes, it is true," murmured D'Avrigny; then turning to Noirtier:

"Do you hope the assassin will be tried?"

"No."

"Then you hope the poison will take no effect on Valentine?"

"Yes."

"It is no news to you," added D'Avrigny, "to tell you an attempt has been made to poison her?"

The old man made a sign that he entertained no doubt upon the subject.

"Then how do you hope Valentine will escape?"

Noirtier kept his eyes steadily fixed on the same spot. D'Avrigny followed the direction, and saw they were fixed on a bottle containing the mixture which he took every morning.

"Ah! ah!" said D'Avrigny, struck with a sudden thought, "has it occurred to you ——"

Noirtier did not let him finish.

"Yes," said he.

"To prepare her system to resist poison?"

"Yes."

"By accustoming her by degrees ——"

"Yes, yes, yes," said Noirtier, delighted to be understood.

"Truly, I had told you there was brucine in the mixture I gave you?"

"Yes."

"And by accustoming her to that poison, you have endeavored to neutralize the effect of a similar poison?"

Noirtier's joy continued.

"And you have succeeded!" exclaimed D'Avrigny. "Without that precaution, Valentine would have died before assistance could have been procured. The dose has been excessive, but she has only been shaken by it; and this time, at any rate, Valentine will not die."

A superhuman joy expanded the old man's eyes, which were raised towards heaven with an expression of infinite gratitude. At this moment Villefort returned.

"Here, doctor," said he, "is what you sent me for."

"Was this prepared in your presence?"

"Yes," replied the procureur du roi.

"Have you not let it go out of your hands?"

"No."

D'Avrigny took the bottle, poured some drops of the mixture it contained in the hollow of his hand, and swallowed them.

"Well," said he, "let us go to Valentine. I will give instructions to every one, and you, M. de Villefort, will yourself see that no one deviates from them."

At the moment when D'Avrigny was returning to Valentine's room, accompanied by Villefort, an Italian priest, of serious demeanor, and calm and firm tone,

hired for his use the house adjoining the hotel of M. de Villefort. No one knew how the three former tenants of that house left it. About two hours afterwards its foundation was reported to be unsafe; but the report did not prevent the new occupant establishing himself there with his modest furniture the same day at five o'clock. The lease was drawn up for three, six, or nine years by the new tenant, who, according to the rule of the proprietor, paid six months in advance. This new tenant, who, as we have said, was an Italian, was called il Signor Giacomo Busoni. Workmen were immediately called in, and the same night the passengers at the end of the faubourg saw, with surprise, carpenters and masons occupied in repairing the lower part of the tottering house.

## CHAPTER XCV.

## THE FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

WE have seen in a preceding chapter Madame Danglars coming formally to announce to Madame de Villefort the approaching marriage of Eugenie Danglars and M. Andrea Cavalcanti. This announcement, which implied, or appeared to imply, a resolution taken by all the parties concerned in this great affair, had been preceded by a scene to which our readers must be admitted. We beg them to take one step backward, and to transport themselves, the morning of that day of great catastrophes, into the beautifully gilded salon we have before shown them, and which was the pride of its owner, the Baron Danglars. In this room, at about ten o'clock in the morning, the banker himself had been walking some minutes, thoughtful, and evidently uneasy, watching each door, and listening to every sound. When his patience was exhausted, he called his valet.

"Stephen," said he, "see why Mademoiselle Eugenie has asked me to meet her in the drawing-room, and why she makes me wait so long."

Having given this vent to his ill-humor, the baron became more calm. Mademoiselle Danglars had that morning requested an interview with her father, and had fixed on that drawing-room as the spot. The singularity of this step, and above all its formal character, had not a little surprised the banker, who had immediately obeyed his daughter by repairing the first to the drawing-room. Stephen soon returned from his errand.

"Mademoiselle's lady's-maid says, sir, that mademoiselle is finishing her toilet, and will be here shortly."

Danglars nodded, to signify he was satisfied. To the world and to his servants Danglars assumed the good-natured man and the weak father. This was one of his characters in the popular comedy he was performing; it was a physiognomy he had adopted, and which appeared as suitable to him as it was to the right side of the profile masks of the fathers of the ancient theatres to have a turned-up and laughing lip, while on the left side it was drawn down and ill-tempered. Let us hasten to say that, in private, the turned-up and laughing lip descended to the level of the drawn-down and ill-tempered one; so that, generally, the indulgent man disappeared to give place to the brutal husband and domineering father.

"Why the devil does that foolish girl, who pretends to wish to speak to me, not come into my cabinet; and why, above all, can she want to speak to me at all?"

He was revolving this worrying thought in his brain for the twentieth time, when the door opened and Eugenie appeared, attired in a figured black satin dress, her hair arranged, and gloves on, as if going to the opera.

"Well, Eugenie, what is it you want with me, and why in this solemn drawing-room, when the cabinet is so comfortable?"

"You are right, sir, and have proposed two questions which include all the conversation we are going to have. I will answer them both, and, contrary to the usual method, the last first, as being the least complex. I have chosen the drawing-room, sir, as our place of rendezvous, in order to avoid the disagreeable impressions and influences of a banker's cabinet. Those cash-books, gilded as they may be; those drawers, locked like gates of fortresses; those heaps of bank-bills, come from I know not where, and the quantities of letters from England, Holland, Spain, India, China, and Peru, have generally a strange influence on a father's mind, and make him forget there is in the world



an interest greater and more sacred than the good opinion of his correspondents. I have, therefore, chosen this drawing-room, where you see, smiling and happy in their magnificent frames, your portrait, mine, my mother's, and all sorts of rural landscapes and touching pastorals. I rely much on external impressions; perhaps with regard to you they are immaterial; but I should be no artist if I had not some fancies."

"Very well," replied M. Danglars, who had listened to all this preamble with imperturbable coolness, but without understanding a word, engaged as he was, like every man burdened with thoughts of the past, in seeking the thread of his own ideas in those of the speaker.

"There is, then, the second point cleared up, or nearly so," said Eugenie, without the least confusion, and with that masculine pointedness which distinguished her gesture and her language; "and you appear satisfied with the explanation. Now, let us return to the first. You ask me why I have requested this interview; I will tell you in two words, sir: I will not marry M. le Comte Cavalcanti."

Danglars bounded from his chair, and with his motion raised his eyes and arms towards heaven.

"Yes, indeed, sir," continued Eugenie, still quite calm; "you are astonished, I see; for since this little affair commenced, I have not manifested the slightest opposition, sure, as I always am, when the opportunity arrives, to oppose to people who have not consulted me and things which displease me, a determined and absolute will. However, this time, this tranquillity, this passiveness, as philosophers say, proceeded from another source; it proceeded from a wish, like a submissive and devoted daughter" (a slight smile was observable on the purple lips of the young girl), "to practise obedience."

"Well?" asked Danglars.

"Well, sir," replied Eugenie, "I have tried to the very last; and now the moment has come, in spite of all my efforts, I feel it is impossible."

"But," said Danglars, whose weak mind was at first quite overwhelmed with the weight of this pitiless logic, marking evident premeditation and force of will, "what is your reason for this refusal, Eugenie? — what reason do you assign?"

"My reason?" replied the young girl; "well, it is not that the man is more ugly, more foolish, or more disagreeable than any other; no; M. Andrea Cavalcanti may appear to those who look at men's faces and figures a very good model. It is not, either, that my heart is less touched by him than any other; that would be a school-girl's reason, which I consider quite beneath me. I actually love no one, sir; you know it, do you not? I do not, then, see why, without real necessity, I should encumber my life with a perpetual companion. Has not some sage said, '*Rien de trop*;' and another, '*Portez tout avec vous-même*'? I have been taught these two aphorisms in Latin and in Greek; one is, I believe from Phædrus, and the other from Bias. Well, my dear father, in the shipwreck of life — for life is an eternal shipwreck of our hopes — I cast into the sea my useless incumbrance, that is all, and I remain with my own will, disposed to live perfectly alone, and, consequently, perfectly free."

"Unhappy girl! unhappy girl!" murmured Danglars, turning pale, for he knew, from long experience, the solidity of the obstacle he so suddenly encountered.

"Unhappy girl!" replied Eugenie, "unhappy girl! do you say, sir? No, indeed, the exclamation appears quite theatrical and affected. Happy, on the contrary; for what am I in want of? The world calls me beautiful. It is something to be well received: I like a favorable reception: it expands the countenance, and those around me do not then appear so ugly. I possess a share of wit, and a certain relative sensibility, which enables me to draw from general life, for the support of mine, all I meet with that is good, like the monkey who cracks the nut to get at its contents. I am rich, for you have one of the

first fortunes in France; I am your only daughter, and you are not so tenacious as the fathers of La Porte Saint-Martin and La Gaieté, who disinherit their daughters because they will give them no grandchildren. Besides, the provident law has deprived you of the power to disinherit me at least entirely, as it has also of the power to compel me to marry a particular person. Thus, beautiful, witty, somewhat talented, as the comic operas say, and rich—and that is happiness, sir—why do you call me unhappy?”

Danglars, seeing his daughter smiling, and proud even to insolence, could not entirely repress his brutal feelings; but they betrayed themselves only by an exclamation. Under the inquiring gaze of his daughter, before that beautiful black eyebrow, contracted by interrogation, he prudently turned away, and calmed himself immediately, daunted by the iron hand of circumspection.

“Truly, my daughter,” replied he, with a smile, “you are all you boast of being, excepting one thing; I will not too hastily tell you which, but would rather leave you to guess it.”

Eugenie looked at Danglars, much surprised that one flower of her crown of pride with which she had so superbly decked herself should be disputed.

“My daughter,” continued the banker, “you have perfectly explained to me the sentiments which influence a girl like you, who is determined she will not marry; now it remains for me to tell you the motives of a father like me, who has decided his daughter shall marry.”

Eugenie bowed, not as a submissive daughter, but as an adversary prepared for a discussion.

“My daughter,” continued Danglars, “when a father asks his daughter to choose a husband, he has always some reason for wishing her to marry. Some are affected with the mania to which you alluded just now, that of living again in their grandchildren. That is not my weakness, I tell you at once—family joys have no charm

for me. I may acknowledge this to a daughter whom I know to be philosophical enough to understand my indifference, and not to impute it to me as a crime."

"*A la bonne heure*," said Eugenie; "let us speak candidly, sir, I admire it."

"Oh!" said Danglars, "I can, when circumstances render it desirable, adopt your system, although it may not be my general practice. I will therefore proceed. I have proposed to you to marry, not for your sake—for, indeed, I did not think of you in the least at the moment (you admire candor, and will now be satisfied, I hope)—but because it suited me to marry you as soon as possible, on account of certain commercial speculations I am desirous of entering into."

Eugenie became uneasy.

"It is just so, I assure you, and you must not be angry with me, for you have sought this disclosure. I do not willingly enter into all these arithmetical explanations with an artist like you, who fears to enter my cabinet lest you should imbibe disagreeable or anti-poetic impressions and sensations. But in that same banker's cabinet, where you very willingly presented yourself yesterday to ask for the thousand francs I give you monthly for pocket-money, you must know, my dear young lady, many things may be learned, useful even to a girl who will not marry. There, one may learn, for instance, what, out of regard to your nervous susceptibility, I will inform you of in the drawing-room, namely, that the credit of a banker is his physical and moral life; that credit sustains him as breath animates the body; and M. de Monte-Cristo once gave me a lecture on that subject, which I have never forgotten. There we may learn that as credit sinks, the body becomes a corpse; and this is what must happen very soon to the banker who is proud to own so good a logician as you for his daughter."

But Eugenie, instead of stooping, drew herself up under the blow.

"Ruined!" said she.

"Exactly, my daughter; that is precisely what I mean," said Danglars, almost digging his nails into his breast, while he preserved on his harsh features the smile of the heartless, though clever man; "ruined! yes, that is it."

"Ah!" said Eugenie.

"Yes, ruined! now it is revealed, this secret so full of horror, as the tragic poet says. Now, my daughter, learn from my lips how you may alleviate this misfortune, so far as it will affect you."

"Oh!" cried Eugenie, "you are a bad physiognomist, if you imagine I deplore, on my own account, the catastrophe you announce to me. *I* ruined! and what will that signify to me? Have I not my talent left? Can I not, like *la Pasta*, *la Malibran*, *la Grisi*, acquire for myself what you would never have given me, whatever might have been your fortune, a hundred or a hundred and fifty thousand livres per annum, for which I shall be indebted to no one but myself, and which, instead of being given as you gave me those poor twelve thousand francs, with pouting looks and reproaches for my prodigality, will be accompanied with acclamations, with bravas, and with flowers? And if I do not possess that talent, which your smile proves to me you doubt, shall I not still have that furious love of independence which will be a substitute for all treasure, and which in my mind supersedes even the instinct of self-preservation? No; I grieve not on my own account; I shall always find a resource; my books, my pencils, my piano, all those things which cost but little, and which I shall be able to procure, will remain my own. Do you think I sorrow for *Madame Danglars*? Undeceive yourself again; either I am greatly mistaken, or she has provided against the catastrophe which threatens you, and which will pass over without affecting her; she has taken care of herself, at least I hope so, for her attention has not been diverted from her projects by watching over me; she has fostered my independence by professedly indulging

my love for liberty. Oh, no, sir! from my childhood I have seen too much, and understood too much, of what has passed around me, for misfortune to have an undue power over me; from my earliest recollections, I have been beloved by no one — so much the better; now you have my profession of faith.”

“Then,” said Danglars, pale with anger, which did not emanate from offended paternal love — “then, mademoiselle, you persist in your determination to accelerate my ruin?”

“Your ruin! I accelerate your ruin! What do you mean? I do not understand you.”

“So much the better; I have a ray of hope left. Listen.”

“I am all attention,” said Eugenie, looking so earnestly at her father that it was an effort to the latter to bear her powerful gaze.

“M. Cavalcanti,” continued Danglars, “is about to marry you, and will place in your hands his fortune, amounting to three million livres.”

“That is admirable!” said Eugenie, with sovereign contempt, smoothing her gloves out one upon the other.

“You think I shall deprive you of those three millions,” said Danglars; “but do not fear it. They are destined to produce at least ten. I and a brother banker have obtained a grant of a railway, the only speculation which in the present day offers any prospect of immediate success, like the chimerical Mississippi, which Law formerly supplied for the good Parisians, those Cockneys in speculation. In my estimation a million’s worth in the railway is equal to an acre of uncultivated land on the banks of the Ohio. It is a deposit, belonging to a mortgage, which is an advance, as you see, since we gain at least ten, fifteen, twenty, or a hundred livres worth of iron in exchange for our money. Well, within a week, I am to deposit four millions for my share; these four millions, I promise you, will produce ten or twelve.”

"But during my visit to you the day before yesterday, sir, which you appear to recollect so well," replied Eugenie, "I saw you lay up—is not that the term?—five millions and a half; you even pointed them out to me in two drafts on the treasury, and you were astonished that so valuable a paper did not dazzle my eyes like lightning."

"Yes; but those five millions and a half are not mine, and are only a proof of the great confidence placed in me; my title of popular banker has gained me the confidence of the hospitals, and the five millions and a half belonged to the hospitals; at any other time I should not have hesitated to make use of them, but the great losses I have recently sustained are well known, and, as I told you, my credit is rather shaken. That deposit may be at any moment withdrawn, and if I had employed it for another purpose, I should bring on me a disgraceful bankruptcy. I do not despise bankruptcies, believe me—those which enrich, but not those which ruin. Now, if you marry M. Cavalcanti, and I touch the three millions, or even if it is thought I am going to touch them, my credit will be restored, and my fortune, which for the last month or two has been swallowed up in gulfs which have been opened in my path by an inconceivable fatality, will revive. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly; you pledge me for three millions, do you not?"

"The greater the amount, the more flattering it is to you; it gives you an idea of your value."

"Thank you. One word more, sir; do you promise me to make what use you can of the report of the fortune M. Cavalcanti will bring, without touching the sum? This is no act of selfishness, but of delicacy. I am willing to help rebuild your fortune, but I will not be an accomplice in the ruin of others."

"But since I tell you," cried Danglars, "that with these three millions——"

"Do you expect to recover your position, sir, without touching those three millions?"

"I hope so, if the marriage should take place and confirm my credit."

"Shall you be able to pay M. Cavalcanti the five hundred thousand francs you promise for my dowry?"

"He shall receive them on returning from the town-hall"

"Well!"

"What next? what more do you want?"

"I wish to know if, in demanding my signature, you leave me entirely free in my person?"

"Absolutely!"

"Then, as I said before, sir, I am ready to marry M. Cavalcanti."

"But what are your projects?"

"Ah! that is my secret. What advantage should I have over you, if, knowing your secret, I were to tell you mine?"

Danglars bit his lips.

"Then," said he, "you are ready to pay the official visits which are absolutely indispensable?"

"Yes," replied Eugenie.

"And to sign the contract in three days?"

"Yes."

"Then in my turn I will say well!"

Danglars pressed his daughter's hand in his. But it was extraordinary, neither did the father say, "Thank you, my child," nor did the daughter smile at her father.

"Is the conference ended?" asked Eugenie, rising.

Danglars motioned that he had nothing more to say. Five minutes after the piano resounded at the touch of Mademoiselle d'Armilly's fingers, and Mademoiselle Danglars was singing Brabantio's malediction on Desdemona. At the end of the piece Stephen entered and announced to Eugenie that the horses were in the carriage, and the baroness was waiting for her to pay her visits. We have seen them at Villefort's; they proceeded then on their course.



## CHAPTER XCVI.

## THE CONTRACT.

THREE days after the scene we have just described, namely, towards five o'clock in the afternoon of the day fixed for the signature of the contract between Mademoiselle Eugenie Danglars and Andrea Cavalcanti, whom the banker persisted in calling prince, as a fresh breeze agitated all the leaves in the little garden situated in front of the Count of Monte-Cristo's house, and the latter was preparing to go out, while his horses were impatiently pawing the ground, held in by the coachman, who had been seated a quarter of an hour on his box, the elegant phaeton with which we are familiar rapidly turned the angle of the entrance-gate, and threw, rather than set down, on the steps of the door, M. Andrea Cavalcanti, as much decked and gay as if he, on his side, were going to marry a princess.

He inquired after the count with his usual familiarity, and, bounding lightly to the first story, met him on the top of the stairs. The count stopped on seeing the young man. As for Andrea, he was launched, and when once launched, nothing stopped him.

"Ah, good morning, my dear count," said he.

"Ah! M. Andrea!" said the latter, with his half-jesting tone, "how do you do?"

"Charmingly, as you see. I am come to talk to you about a thousand things; but, first tell me, were you going out or just returned?"

"I was going out, sir."

"Then, in order not to hinder you, I will get up with

you, if you please, in your carriage, and Tom shall follow with my phaeton in tow."

"No," said the count, with an imperceptible smile of contempt, for he had no wish to be seen in the young man's society — "no; I prefer listening to you here, my dear M. Andrea; we can chat better indoors, and there is no coachman to overhear our conversation."

The count returned to a small drawing-room on the first floor, sat down, and, crossing his legs, motioned to the young man to take a seat also.

Andrea assumed his gayest manner.

"You know, my dear count," said he, "the ceremony is to take place this evening. At nine o'clock the contract is to be signed at my father-in-law's."

"Ah! indeed?" said Monte-Cristo.

"What! is it news to you? Has not M. Danglars apprised you of the solemnity?"

"Oh, yes," said the count; "I received a letter from him yesterday, but I do not think the hour was mentioned."

"Possibly; my father-in-law trusted to its general notoriety."

"Well," said Monte-Cristo, "you are fortunate, M. Cavalcanti! it is a most suitable alliance you are contracting, and Mademoiselle Danglars is a pretty girl."

"Yes, indeed, she is," replied Cavalcanti, with a very modest tone.

"Above all, she is very rich — at least I believe so," said Monte-Cristo.

"Very rich, do you think?" replied the young man.

"Doubtless; it is said M. Danglars conceals at least half his fortune."

"And he acknowledges fifteen or twenty millions," said Andrea, with a look sparkling with joy.

"Without reckoning," added Monte-Cristo, "that he is on the eve of entering into a sort of speculation already in vogue in the United States and in England, but quite novel in France."

"Yes, yes, I know what you allude to — the railway, of which he has obtained the grant, is it not?"

"Precisely! It is believed he will gain ten millions by that affair."

"Ten millions! Do you think so? It is magnificent!" said Cavalcanti, who was quite confounded at the metallic sound of these golden words.

"Without reckoning," replied Monte-Cristo, "that all his fortune will come to you, and justly, too, since Mademoiselle Danglars is an only daughter. Besides, your own fortune, as your father assured me, is almost equal to that of your betrothed. But, enough of money matters. Do you know, M. Andrea, I think you have managed this affair rather skilfully?"

"Not badly, by any means," said the young man; "I was born for a diplomatist."

"Well, you must become a diplomatist; it is a knowledge not to be acquired, you know; it is instinctive. Have you lost your heart?"

"Indeed I fear it," replied Andrea, in the tone in which he had heard Dorante or Valere reply to Alceste in the *Théâtre Française*.

"Is your love returned?"

"I suppose so," said Andrea, with a triumphant smile, "since I am accepted. But I must not forget one grand point."

"Which?"

"That I have been singularly assisted."

"Nonsense!"

"I have, indeed."

"By circumstances?"

"No; by you."

"By me? Not at all, prince," said Monte-Cristo, laying a marked stress on the title; "what have I done for you? Are not your name, your social position, and your merit sufficient?"

"No," said Andrea, — "no; it is useless for you to say

so, count. I maintain that the position of a man like you has done more than my name, my social position, and my merit."

"You are completely mistaken, sir," said Monte-Cristo, coldly, who felt the perfidious manœuvre of the young man, and understood the bearing of his words; "you only acquired my protection after the influence and fortune of your father had been ascertained; for, after all, who procured for me, who had never seen either you or your illustrious father, the pleasure of your acquaintance? Two of my good friends, Lord Wilmore and the Abbé Busoni. Who encouraged me not to become your surety, but to patronize you? It was your father's name, so well known in Italy, and so highly honored. Personally, I do not know you."

This calm tone and perfect ease made Andrea feel he was, for the moment, restrained by a more muscular hand than his own, and that the restraint could not be easily broken through.

"Oh! then, my father has really a very large fortune, count?"

"It appears so, sir," replied Monte-Cristo.

"Do you know if my promised dowry is come?"

"I have been advised of it."

"But the three millions."

"The three millions are probably on the road."

"Then, I shall really have them?"

"Forsooth!" said the count, "I do not think you have yet known the want of money."

Andrea was so surprised, he reflected for a moment. Then, arousing from his reverie:

"Now, sir, I have one request to make to you, which you will understand, even if it should be disagreeable to you."

"Proceed," said Monte-Cristo.

"I have formed an acquaintance, thanks to my good fortune, with many noted persons, and have, at least

for the moment, a crowd of friends. But marrying, as I am about to do, before all Paris, I ought to be supported by an illustrious name, and, in the absence of the paternal hand, some powerful one ought to lead me to the altar. Now, my father is not coming to Paris, is he? He is old, covered with wounds, and suffers dreadfully, he says, in travelling."

"Indeed!"

"Well, I am come to ask a favor of you."

"Of me?"

"Yes, of you."

"And pray what may it be?"

"Well, to take his part."

"Ah, my dear sir! What! after the numerous relations I have had the happiness to sustain towards you, you know me so little as to ask such a thing! Ask me to lend you half a million, and although such a loan is somewhat rare, on my honor, you would annoy me less. Know, then, what I thought I had already told you, that, in its moral participation, particularly with this world's affairs, the Count of Monte-Cristo has never ceased to entertain the scruples and even the superstitions of the East. I, who have a seraglio at Cairo, one at Smyrna, and one at Constantinople, preside at a wedding — never!"

"Then you refuse me?"

"Decidedly; and were you my son or my brother, I would refuse you in the same way."

"But what must be done?" said Andrea, disappointed.

"You said just now you had a hundred friends."

"Agreed; but you introduced me at M. Danglars."

"Not at all; let us recall the exact facts. You met him at a dinner-party at my house, and you introduced yourself at his house; that is a totally different affair."

"Yes, but my marriage — you have forwarded that."

"I? Not in the least, I beg you to believe. Recollect what I told you when you asked me to propose you:

‘Oh! I never make matches, my dear prince—it is my settled principle.’”

Andrea bit his lips.

“But, at least, you will be there?”

“Will all Paris be there?”

“Oh, certainly!”

“Well, like all Paris, I shall be there, too,” said the count.

“And will you sign the contract?”

“I see no objection to that; my scruples do not go thus far.”

“Well, since you will grant me no more I must be content with what you give me. But, one word more, count.”

“What is it?”

“Advice.”

“Be careful; advice is worse than a service.”

“Oh! you can give me this without compromising yourself.”

“Tell me what it is.”

“Is my wife’s fortune five hundred thousand livres?”

“That is the sum M. Danglars himself announced.”

“Must I receive it, or leave it in the hands of the notary?”

“This is the way such affairs are generally arranged when it is wished to do them stylishly: your two solicitors appoint a meeting, when the contract is signed, for the next day or the following; then they exchange the two portions, for which they each give a receipt; then, when the marriage is celebrated, they place the amount at your disposal as chief of the community.”

“Because,” said Andrea, with a certain ill-concealed uneasiness, “I thought I heard my father-in-law say he intended embarking our property in that famous railway affair of which you spoke just now.”

“Well,” replied Monte-Cristo, “it will be the way, everybody says, of trebling your fortune in twelve

months. The Baron Danglars is a good father, and knows how to calculate."

"Come, then," said Andrea, "all is well, excepting your refusal, which quite grieves me."

"You must attribute it only to natural scruples under similar circumstances."

"Well," said Andrea, "let it be as you wish; this evening, then, at nine o'clock."

"Adieu, till then."

Notwithstanding a slight resistance on the part of Monte-Cristo, whose lips turned pale, but preserved his ceremonious smile, Andrea seized the count's hand, pressed it, jumped into his phaeton and disappeared.

The four or five remaining hours before nine o'clock arrived, Andrea employed in riding, paying visits destined to interest those of whom he had spoken to appear at the banker's in their gayest equipages, dazzling them by promises of grand feasts, which have since turned every brain, and in which Danglars was just becoming initiated. In fact, at half-past eight in the evening, the grand salon, the gallery adjoining, and the three drawing-rooms on the same floor were filled with a perfumed crowd, who sympathized but little in the event, but who all participated in that love of being present wherever there is anything fresh to be seen. An Academician would say that soirees of the world are collections of flowers which attract inconstant butterflies, famished bees, and buzzing drones.

No one could dispute that the rooms were splendidly illuminated; the light streamed forth on the gold mouldings, and the silk hangings, and all the bad taste of this furniture, which had only its richness to boast of, shone in its splendor. Mademoiselle Eugenie was dressed with elegant simplicity; a figured white silk dress, a white rose half concealed in her jet-black hair, were her only ornaments, unaccompanied by a single jewel. Her eyes, however, betrayed that perfect confidence which contradicted the girlish simplicity of this modest attire. Madame

Danglars was chatting at a short distance with Debray, Beauchamp, and Château-Renaud. Debray was admitted to the house for this grand solemnity, but like every one else, and without any particular privilege.

M. Danglars, surrounded by deputies and men connected with the revenue, was explaining a new theory of taxation which he intended to adopt when the course of events had compelled government to call him into the ministry. Andrea, on whose arm hung one of the most consummate dandies of the opera, was explaining to him rather cleverly, since he was obliged to be bold to appear at ease, his future projects, and the new luxuries he meant to introduce to Parisian fashions with his one hundred and seventy-five thousand livres per annum. The crowd moved to and fro in those rooms like an ebb and flow of turquoises, rubies, emeralds, opals, and diamonds. As usual, the oldest women were the most decorated, and the ugliest the most conspicuous. If there was a beautiful lily, or a sweet rose, you had to search for it, concealed in some corner behind a mother with a turban, or an aunt with a bird of paradise.

At each moment, in the midst of the crowd, the buzzing and the laughter, the doorkeeper's voice was heard announcing some name well known in the financial department, respected in the army, or illustrious in the literary world, and which was acknowledged by a slight movement in the different groups. But for one whose privilege it was to agitate that ocean of human waves, how many were received with a look of indifference or a sneer of disdain! At the moment when the hand of the massive timepiece, representing Endymion asleep, pointed to nine on its golden face, and the hammer, the faithful type of mechanical thought, struck nine times, the name of Count de Monte-Cristo resounded in its turn, and, as if by an electric shock, all the assembly turned towards the door. The count was dressed in black, and with his habitual simplicity; his white waistcoat displayed his expansive chest,



his black stock appeared somewhat remarkable, contrasting, as it did, with the deadly paleness of his face. His only jewel was a chain so fine that the slender gold thread was scarcely perceptible on his white waistcoat.

A circle was formed immediately around the door. The count perceived at one glance Madame Danglars at one end of the drawing-room, M. Danglars at the other, and Eugenie in front of him. He first advanced towards the baroness, who was chatting with Madame Villefort, who had come alone, Valentine being still an invalid; and without turning aside, so clear was the road left for him, he passed from the baroness to Eugenie, whom he complimented in such rapid and measured terms, that the proud artist was quite struck. Near her was Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly, who thanked the count for the letters of introduction he had so kindly given her for Italy, which she intended immediately to make use of. On leaving the ladies he found himself with Danglars, who had advanced to meet him.

Having accomplished these three social duties, Monte-Cristo stopped, looking around him with that expression peculiar to a certain class, which seems to say, "I have done my duty, now let others do theirs." Andrea, who was in an adjoining room, had shared in the sensation caused by the arrival of Monte-Cristo, and now came forward to pay his respects to the count. He found him completely surrounded; all were eager to speak to him, as is always the case with those whose words are few and weighty. The solicitors arrived at this moment, and arranged their scrawled papers on the velvet cloth embroidered with gold which covered the table prepared for the signature; it was a gilt table supported on lion's claws. One of the notaries sat down, the other remained standing. They were about to proceed to the reading of the contract which half Paris assembled was to sign. All took their place, or rather the ladies formed a circle, while the gentlemen (more indifferent as to the place of the *style énergique*,

as Boileau says), commented on the feverish agitation of Andrea, on M. Danglars's riveted attention, Eugenie's composure, and the light and sprightly manner in which the baroness treated this important affair.

The contract was read during a profound silence. But as soon as it was finished, the buzz was redoubled through all the drawing-rooms; the brilliant sum, the rolling millions which were to be at the command of the two young people and which crowned the display, which had been made in the room entirely appropriated for that purpose, of the wedding presents, and the young lady's diamonds, had resounded with all their delusion on the jealous assembly. Mademoiselle Danglars's charms were heightened in the opinion of the young men, and for the moment seemed to outvie the sun in splendor.

As for the ladies, it is needless to say that, while jealous of these millions, they thought they did not require them to render them beautiful. Andrea, surrounded by his friends, complimented, flattered, beginning to believe in the reality of his dream, was almost bewildered. The notary solemnly took the pen, flourished it above his head, and said:

"Gentlemen, the contract is to be signed."

The baron was to sign first, then the representative of M. Cavalcanti, senior, then the baroness, afterwards the future couple, as they are styled on the ceremoniously stamped papers. The baron took the pen and signed, then the representative.

The baroness approached leaning on Madame de Villefort's arm.

"My dear," said she, as she took the pen, "is it not vexatious? An unexpected incident, in the affair of murder and theft at the Count of Monte-Cristo's in which he nearly fell a victim, deprives us of the pleasure of seeing M. de Villefort."

"Indeed," said M. Danglars, in the same tone in which he would have said, "Faith, I care very little about it."

"Indeed," said Monte-Cristo, approaching, "I am much afraid I am the involuntary cause of that absence."

"What! you, count?" said Madame Danglars, signing; "if you are, take care; I shall never forgive you."

Andrea pricked his ears.

"But it is not my fault, as I shall endeavor to prove."

Every one listened eagerly; Monte-Cristo, who so rarely opened his lips, was about to speak.

"You remember," said the count, during the most profound silence, "that the unhappy wretch who came to rob me died at my house; it was supposed he was stabbed by his accomplice, on attempting to leave it."

"Yes," said Danglars.

"In order to examine his wounds, he was undressed, and his clothes were thrown into a corner, where the officers of justice picked them up, with the exception of the waistcoat, which they overlooked."

Andrea turned pale, and drew towards the door; he saw a cloud rising in the horizon, which appeared to forbode a coming storm.

"Well! this waistcoat was discovered to-day, covered with blood, and with a hole over the heart."

The ladies screamed and two or three prepared to faint.

"It was brought to me. No one could guess what the dirty rag could be; I alone supposed it was the waistcoat of the victim. My valet, in examining this mournful relic, felt a paper in the pocket and drew it out; it was a letter addressed to you, baron."

"To me!" cried Danglars.

"Yes, indeed, to you; I succeeded in deciphering your name under the blood with which the letter was stained," replied Monte-Cristo, amid the general burst of amazement.

"But," asked Madame Danglars, looking at her husband with uneasiness, "how could that prevent M. de Villefort ——"

"In this simple way, madame," replied Monte-Cristo; "the waistcoat and the letter were both what is termed

convictive evidence; I therefore sent it all to M. le procureur du roi. You understand, my dear baron, legal proceedings are the safest in criminal cases; it was perhaps some plot against you."

Andrea looked steadily at Monte-Cristo, and disappeared in the second drawing-room.

"Possibly," said Danglars; "was not this murdered man an old galley-slave?"

"Yes," replied the count; "a felon named Caderousse."

Danglars turned slightly pale; Andrea reached the ante-room beyond the little drawing-room.

"But go on signing," said Monte-Cristo; "I perceive my story has caused a general emotion, and I beg to apologize to you, baroness, and to Mademoiselle Danglars."

The baroness, who had signed, returned the pen to the notary.

"Prince Cavalcanti!" said the latter; "Prince Cavalcanti, where are you?"

"Andrea! Andrea!" repeated several young people, who were already on sufficiently intimate terms with him to call him by his Christian name.

"Call the prince! inform him it is his turn to sign!" cried Danglars to one of the doorkeepers.

But at the same instant the crowd of guests rushed terrified into the principal salon, as if some frightful monster had entered the apartments, *quærens quem devoret*. There was, indeed, reason to retreat, to be alarmed, and to scream.

An officer was placing two soldiers at the door of each drawing-room, and was advancing towards Danglars, preceded by a commissioner of police, girded with his scarf.

Madame Danglars uttered a scream and fainted. Danglars, who thought himself threatened (certain consciences are never calm)—Danglars appeared before his guests with a terrified countenance.

"What is the matter, sir?" asked Monte-Cristo, advancing to meet the commissioner.

"Which of you gentlemen," asked the magistrate, with-

out replying to the count, "answers to the name of Andrea Cavalcanti?"

A cry of stupor was heard from all parts of the room.

They searched; they questioned.

"But who, then, is Andrea Cavalcanti?" asked Danglars in amazement.

"A galley-slave, escaped from confinement at Toulouse."

"And what crime has he committed?"

"He is accused," said the commissary, with his inflexible voice, "of having assassinated the man named Cadrousse, his former companion in prison, at the moment he was making his escape from the house of the Count of Monte-Cristo."

Monte-Cristo cast a rapid glance around him. Andrea was gone.

## CHAPTER XCVII.

## THE DEPARTURE FOR BELGIUM.

A FEW minutes after the scene of confusion produced in the salons of M. Danglars by the unexpected appearance of the brigade of soldiers, and by the disclosure which had followed, the large hotel was deserted with a rapidity which the announcement of a case of plague or of cholera morbus among the guests would have caused. In a few minutes, through all the doors, down all the staircases, by every issue, each one had hastened to retire, or rather fly; for it was one of those circumstances in which it is useless to attempt to impart that common consolation which makes even the best friends importunate under great catastrophes.

There remained in the banker's hotel only Danglars, closeted in his cabinet, and making his statement to the officer of the detachment; Madame Danglars, terrified, in her boudoir with which we are acquainted, and Eugenie, who, with haughty air and disdainful lip, had retired to her room with her inseparable companion, Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly.

As for the numerous servants (more numerous that evening than usual, for their number was augmented by the cooks and butlers of the Café de Paris), venting on their employers their anger at what they termed the insult, they collected in groups in the hall, in the kitchens, or in their rooms, thinking very little of their duty, which was thus naturally interrupted.

Of all this household, only two individuals deserve our notice; these are Mademoiselle Eugenie Danglars and Mademoiselle d'Armilly.

The betrothed had retired, as we have said, with a haughty air, disdainful lip, and the demeanor of an outraged queen, followed by her companion, paler and more affected than herself. On reaching her room, Eugenie locked the door, while Louise fell on a chair.

"Ah, what a dreadful thing!" said the young musician; "who would have suspected it? M. Andrea Cavalcanti a murderer — a galley-slave escaped — a convict."

An ironical smile curled the lip of Eugenie. "In truth I was fated," said she; "I escaped the Morcerf only to fall into the Cavalcanti."

"Oh, do not confound the two, Eugenie!"

"Hold your tongue! The men are all infamous; and I am happy to be able now to do more than detest them — I despise them!"

"What shall we do?" asked Louise.

"What shall we do?"

"Yes."

"Why, the same we had intended doing three days since — set off."

"What! although you are not now going to be married, you intend still ——"

"Listen, Louise! I hate this life of the fashionable world, always ordered, measured, ruled like our music-paper. What I have always wished for, desired, and coveted, is the life of an artist, free and independent, relying on my own resources, and accountable only to myself. Remain here! what for? — that they may try, a month hence, to marry me again; and to whom? — to M. Debray, perhaps, as it was once proposed. No, Louise, no! This evening's adventure will serve for my excuse. I did not seek one, I did not ask for one. God sends me this, and I hail it joyfully!"

"How strong and courageous you are!" said the fair frail girl to her brunette companion.

"Did you not yet know me? Come, Louise, let us talk of our affairs. The post-chaise ——"

"Was happily bought three days since."

"Have you had it sent where we are to go for it?"

"Yes."

"Our passport?"

"Here it is."

And Eugenie, with her usual precision, opened a printed paper, and read:

"M. Leon d'Armilly, twenty years of age; profession, artist; hair black; eyes black; travelling with his sister."

"Capital! How did you get this passport?"

"When I went to ask M. Monte-Cristo for letters for the director of the theatres at Rome and at Naples, I expressed my fears of travelling as a female; he perfectly understood them, and undertook to procure for me a man's passport; and two days after I received this, to which I have added with my own hand, 'travelling with his sister.'"

"Well," said Eugenie, cheerfully, "we have then only to pack up our trunks; we shall start the evening of the signature, instead of the evening of the wedding—that is all."

"Reflect well, Eugenie!"

"Oh, I have finished all my reflections! I am tired of hearing only of reports, of the end of the month, of up and down, of Spanish funds, of Haïtian paper. Instead of that, Louise—do you understand?—air, liberty, melody of birds, plains of Lombardy, Venetian canals, Roman palaces, the bay of Naples! How much have we, Louise?"

The young girl to whom this question was addressed drew from an inlaid secrétaire a small portfolio with a lock, in which she counted twenty-three bank-notes.

"Twenty-three thousand francs," said she.

"And as much, at least, in pearls, diamonds, and jewels," said Eugenie. "We are rich. With forty-five thousand francs we have enough to live on as princesses."



during two years, and comfortably during four; but before six months — you with your music, and I with my voice — we shall double our capital. Come, you shall take charge of the money, and I of the jewel-box; so that if one of us had the misfortune to lose her treasure, the other would still have hers left. Now the portmanteau! — let us make haste — the portmanteau!”

“Stop!” said Louise, going to listen at Madame Danglars’s door.

“What do you fear?”

“That we may be discovered.”

“The door is locked.”

“They may tell us to open it.”

“They may if they like, but we will not.”

“You are a perfect Amazon, Eugenie!”

And the two young girls began to heap into a trunk all the things they thought they should require.

“There now,” said Eugenie, “while I change my costume do you lock the portmanteau.”

Louise pressed with all the strength of her little hands on the top of the portmanteau.

“But I cannot,” said she; “I am not strong enough; do you shut it.”

“Ah, you are right!” said Eugenie, laughing; “I forgot I was Hercules, and you only the pale Omphale!” And the young girl, kneeling on the top, pressed the two parts of the portmanteau together, and Mademoiselle d’Armilly passed the bolt of the padlock through.

When this was done, Eugenie opened the drawer, of which she kept the key, and took from it a wadded violet silk travelling-cloak.

“Here,” said she, “you will see I have thought of everything; with this cloak you will not be cold.”

“But you?”

“Oh, I am never cold, you know! Besides, with those men’s clothes ——”

“Will you dress here?”

"Certainly."

"Shall you have time?"

"Do not be uneasy, you little coward! All our servants are busy discussing the grand affair. Besides, what is there astonishing, when you think of the grief I ought to be in, that I shut myself up? tell me!"

"No, truly — you comfort me."

"Come and help me."

From the same drawer she took a complete man's costume, from the boots to the coat, and a provision of linen, where there was nothing superfluous, but every requisite.

Then, with a promptitude which indicated this was not the first time she amused herself by adopting the garb of the opposite sex, Eugenie drew on the boots and pantaloons, tied her cravat, buttoned her waistcoat up to the throat, and put on a coat which admirably fitted her beautiful figure.

"Oh, that is very good! — indeed, it is very good!" said Louise, looking at her with admiration; "but that beautiful black hair, those magnificent braids, which made all the ladies sigh with envy, will they go under a man's hat like the one I see down there?"

"You shall see," said Eugenie.

And seizing with her left hand the thick mass, which her long fingers could scarcely grasp, she seized with her right hand a pair of long scissors, and soon the steel met through the rich and splendid hair, which fell entire at the feet of the young girl, who leaned back to keep it from her coat. Then she passed to the front hair, which she also cut off, without expressing the least regret; on the contrary, her eyes sparkled with greater pleasure than usual under her eyebrows black as ebony.

"Oh, the magnificent hair!" said Louise, with regret.

"And am I not a hundred times better thus?" cried Eugenie, smoothing the scattered curls of her hair, which had now quite a masculine appearance; "and do you not think me handsomer so?"

"Oh, you are beautiful — always beautiful!" cried Louise. "Now where are you going?"

"To Brussels, if you like; it is the nearest frontier. We can go to Brussels, Liège, Aix-la-Chapelle; then up the Rhine to Strasburg. We will cross Switzerland, and go down into Italy by Mount St. Gothard. Will that do?"

"Yes."

"What are you looking at?"

"I am looking at you; indeed, you are adorable, like that! One would say you were carrying me off."

"And they would be right, *pardieu!*"

And the two young girls, whom every one might have thought plunged in grief, the one on her own account, the other from interest in her friend, burst out laughing as they cleared away every visible trace of the disorder which had naturally accompanied the preparations for their escape. Then, having blown out their lights, with an inquiring eye, listening ear, and extended neck, the two fugitives opened the door of a dressing-room which led, by a side staircase, down to the yard, Eugenie going first, and holding with one arm the portmanteau, which, by the opposite handle, Mademoiselle d'Armilly scarcely raised with both hands.

The yard was empty; the clock was striking twelve. The porter was not yet gone to bed. Eugenie approached softly, and saw the old man sleeping soundly in an arm-chair in his lodge. She returned to Louise, took up the portmanteau, which she had placed for a moment on the ground, and they reached the archway under the shadow of the wall.

Eugenie concealed Louise in an angle of the gateway, so that if the porter chanced to awake he might see but one person. Then placing herself in the full light of the lamp which lit the yard:

"Gate!" cried she, with her finest contralto voice, and rapping at the window.

The porter got up, as Eugenie expected, and even ad-

vanced some steps to recognize the person who was going out; but seeing a young man striking his boot impatiently with his riding-whip, he opened it immediately.

Louise slid through the half-open gate like a snake, and bounded lightly forward. Eugenie, apparently calm, although in all probability her heart beat somewhat faster than usual, went out in her turn.

A porter was passing: they gave him the portmanteau; then the two young girls, having told him to take it to No. 36 Rue de la Victoire, walked behind this man, whose presence comforted Louise. As for Eugenie, she was strong as a Judith or a Delilah. They arrived at the appointed spot. Eugenie ordered the porter to put down the portmanteau, gave him some pieces of money, and, having rapped at the shutter, sent him away.

The shutter where Eugenie had rapped was that of a little laundress, who had been previously apprised, and was not yet gone to bed. She opened the door.

"Mademoiselle," said Eugenie, "let the porter get the post-chaise from the coach-house and fetch some post-horses from the hotel. Here are five francs for his trouble."

"Indeed," said Louise, "I admire you, and I could almost say respect you."

The laundress looked on in astonishment; but as she had been promised twenty louis, she made no remark.

In a quarter of an hour the porter returned with a post-boy and horses, which were harnessed and put in the post chaise in a minute, while the porter fastened the portmanteau on with the assistance of a cord and a strap.

"Here is the passport," said the postilion; "which way are we going, young gentleman?"

"To Fontainebleau," replied Eugenie, with an almost masculine voice.

"What do you say?" said Louise.

"I am giving the slip," said Eugenie; "this woman to whom we have given the twenty louis may betray us for forty; we will soon alter our direction."

And the young girls jumped into the britska, which was admirably arranged for sleeping in, without scarcely touching the step.

"You are always right," said the singing governess, seating herself by the side of her friend.

A quarter of an hour afterward, the postilion, having been put in the right road, passed, cracking his whip, through the gateway of the Barrière Saint-Martin.

"Ah!" said Louise, breathing freely, "here we are out of Paris."

"Yes, my dear, and the escape is good and well effected," replied Eugenie.

"Yes, and without violence," said Louise.

"I shall bring that forward as an extenuating circumstance," replied Eugenie.

These words were lost in the noise which the carriage made in rolling over the pavement of La Villete.

M. Danglars had lost his daughter.

## CHAPTER XCVIII.

## THE HOTEL OF THE BELL AND BOTTLE.

AND now let us leave Mademoiselle Danglars and her friend pursuing their way to Brussels, and return to poor Andrea Cavalcanti, so uncomfortably interrupted in his career of fortune. Notwithstanding his youth, Master Andrea was a very skilful and intelligent boy. We have seen that, on the first rumor which reached the salon, he had gradually approached the door, and, crossing two or three rooms, at last disappeared. But we have forgotten to mention one circumstance, which, nevertheless, ought not to be omitted; it was, that in one of the rooms he crossed the *trousseau* of the bride-elect was exposed to view, consisting of cases of diamonds, cashmere shawls, Valenciennes lace, English veils, and, in fact, all those tempting things, the bare mention of which makes the hearts of young girls bound with joy, and which is called the *corbeille*. Now, in passing through this room, Andrea proved himself not only to be clever and intelligent, but also provident, for he helped himself to the most valuable of the ornaments before him.

Furnished with this plunder, Andrea leaped, with a lighter heart, from the window, intending to slip through the hands of the gendarmes. Tall and well-proportioned as an ancient gladiator, and muscular as a Spartan, he walked for a quarter of an hour without knowing where to direct his steps, actuated by the sole idea of removing himself from the spot where he knew he must be taken. Having passed through the Rue Mont Blanc, he found himself, with the instinct which thieves have in avoiding

barriers, at the end of the Rue Lafayette. There he stopped, breathless and panting. He was quite alone; on one side was the vast wilderness of the Saint-Lazare; on the other, Paris in all its darkness.

"Am I lost?" he cried; "no, not if I can use more activity than my enemies. My safety is now a mere question of speed."

At this moment he perceived a cab at the top of the Faubourg Poissonniere. The dull driver, smoking his pipe, appeared to be seeking to regain the extremities of the Faubourg St. Denis, where, no doubt, he ordinarily stood.

"Ho, friend!" said Benedetto.

"What do you want, sir?" asked the driver.

"Is your horse tired?"

"Tired? oh, yes, tired enough!—he has done nothing the whole of this blessed day! Four wretched fares, and twenty sous over, making in all seven francs, are all that I have earned, and I ought to take ten to the owner."

"Will you add these twenty francs to the seven you have?"

"With pleasure, sir; twenty francs are not to be despised. Tell me what I am to do for this."

"A very easy thing if your horse be not tired."

"I tell you he will go like the wind, only tell me which way to drive."

"Towards Louvres."

"Ah! I know it!—the land of ratafia."

"Exactly so; I merely wish to overtake one of my friends, with whom I am going to hunt to-morrow at Chapelle-en-Serval. He should have waited for me here with a cabriolet till half-past eleven; it is twelve, and, tired of waiting, he must have gone on."

"It is likely."

"Well, will you try and overtake him?"

"Nothing I should like better."

"If you do not overtake him before we reach Bourget, you shall have twenty francs; if not before Louvres, thirty."

"And if we do overtake him?"

"Forty," said Andrea, after a moment's hesitation, at the end of which he remembered that he might safely promise.

"That will do!" said the man; "get in and we're off!"

Andrea got in the cab, which passed rapidly through the Faubourg St. Denis, along the Faubourg St. Martin, crossed the barrier, and threaded its way through the interminable Villet. They never overtook the chimerical friend, yet Andrea frequently inquired of the passers-by and at the inns, which were not yet closed, for a green cabriolet and bay horse; and as there are a great many cabriolets to be seen on the road to the Pays-Bas, and nine-tenths of them are green, the inquiries increased at every step. Every one had just seen it pass; it was only five hundred, two hundred, one hundred steps in advance; at length they reached it, but it was not the friend. Once the cab was also passed by a calèche, rapidly whirled along by two post-horses.

"Ah!" said Cavalcanti to himself, "if I only had that britska, those two good post-horses, and, above all, the passport that carries them on!" And he sighed deeply.

The calèche contained Mademoiselle Danglars and Mademoiselle d'Armilly.

"Onward! onward!" said Andrea, "we must overtake him soon." And the poor horse resumed the desperate gallop it had never slackened since leaving the barrier, and arrived smoking at Louvres.

"Certainly," said Andrea, "I shall not overtake my friend, but I shall kill your horse, therefore I had better stop. Here are thirty francs; I will sleep at the Cheval Rouge, and will secure a place in the first coach. Good night, friend!" And Andrea, after placing six pieces of



five francs each in the man's hand, leaped lightly on to the pathway.

The coachman joyfully pocketed the sum, and turned back on his road to Paris. Andrea pretended to go towards the hotel of the Cheval Rouge, but after stopping an instant against the door, and hearing the last sound of the cab, which was disappearing to view, he went on his road, and with a firm tread prepared for a walk of two leagues. There he rested; he must be near the Chapelle-en-Serval, where he pretended to be going. It was not fatigue that stayed Andrea here; it was that he might form some resolution—adopt some plan. It would be impossible to make use of a diligence, equally so to engage post-horses; to travel either way a passport was necessary. It would also be imprudent to remain in the department of the Oise, one of the most open and strictly guarded in France; this was quite impossible, especially to a man like Andrea, perfectly conversant on criminal matters. He sat down by the side of the moat, buried his face in his hands, and reflected. Ten minutes after he raised his head; his resolution was made. He threw some dust over the paletot, which he had found time to unhook from the antechamber and button over his ball costume, and, going to Chapelle-en-Serval, he knocked loudly at the door of the only inn in the place. The host opened it.

"My friend," said Andrea, "I was coming from Montefontaine to Senlis, when my horse, which is a troublesome creature, stumbled and threw me. I must reach Compiègne to-night, or I shall cause deep anxiety to my family. Could you let me hire a horse of you?"

An inn-keeper has always a horse to let, whether it be good or bad. The host of La Chapelle-en-Serval called the stable boy, and ordered him to saddle *Le Blanc*; then he awoke his son, a child of seven years, whom he ordered to ride before the gentleman and bring back the horse. Andrea gave the inn-keeper twenty francs. In taking

them from his pocket, he dropped a visiting-card. This belonged to one of his friends at the Café de Paris, so that the inn-keeper, picking it up after Andrea had left, was convinced that he had let his horse to M. le Comte de Mauleon, 25 Rue Saint-Dominique, these being the name and address on the card.

*Le Blanc* was not a fast animal, but it went equally and steadily; in three hours and a half Andrea had run over the nine leagues which lie between Compiègne, and four o'clock struck as he reached the place where the diligences stop. There is an excellent hotel at Compiègne, well remembered by those who have once been to it. Andrea, who had often stayed there in his rides about Paris, recollected the hotel of the Bell and Bottle; he turned around, saw the sign by the light of a reflected lamp, and having dismissed the child, giving him all the small coin he had about him, he began knocking at the door, reflecting, with justice, that, having now three or four hours before him, he had best fortify himself against the fatigues of the morrow by a sound sleep and a good supper. A waiter opened the door.

"My friend," said Andrea, "I have been dining at St. Jean-au-Bois, and expected to catch the coach which passes by at midnight, but, like a fool, I have lost my way, and have been walking for the last four hours in the forest. Show me into one of those pretty little rooms which overlook the court, and bring me a cold fowl and a bottle of Bordeaux."

The waiter had no suspicion. Andrea spoke with perfect composure; he had a cigar in his mouth, and his hands in the pockets of his paletot; his clothes were elegant, his chin smooth, his boots irreproachable; he looked merely as if he had stayed out very late, that was all. While the waiter was preparing his room, the hostess rose; Andrea assumed his most charming smile, and asked if he could have No. 3, which he had occupied on his last stay at Compiègne. Unfortunately No. 3 was engaged by a

young man who was travelling with his sister. Andrea appeared in despair, but consoled himself when the hostess assured him that No. 7, prepared for him, was situated precisely the same as No. 3, and while warming his feet and chatting about the last races at Chantilly, he waited until they announced his room to be ready.

Andrea had not spoken without cause of the pretty rooms looking out upon the court of the Bell Hotel, which, with its triple stages of galleries, looking like a theatre, with the jasmine and clematis twining around the light columns, forms one of the prettiest entrances to an inn you can imagine. The fowl was fresh, the wine old, the fire clear and sparkling, and Andrea was surprised to find himself eating with as good an appetite as though nothing had happened. Then he went to bed, and almost immediately fell into that deep sleep which is sure to visit men of twenty years of age, even when they are torn with remorse. Now here we are obliged to own that Andrea ought to have felt remorse, but that he did not.

This was the plan which had appeared to him to afford the best chance of his security. Before daybreak he would awake, leave the hotel after faithfully discharging his bill, and reaching the forest, he would, under pretence of making studies in painting, test the hospitality of some peasants; procure himself the dress of a wood-cutter and a hatchet, casting off the lion's skin to assume that of a woodman; then, with his hands covered with dirt, his hair darkened by means of a leaden comb, his complexion embrowned with a preparation for which one of his old comrades had given him the receipt, he intended, through different forests, to reach the nearest frontier, walking by night and sleeping in the day in the forests and quarries, and only entering inhabited districts to buy a loaf from time to time. Once past the frontier, Andrea proposed making money of his diamonds; and by uniting the proceeds to ten bank-notes he always carried about him in case of accident, he would then find himself possessor

of about fifty thousand livres, which he philosophically considered as no very deplorable condition, after all. Moreover, he reckoned much on its being to the interest of Danglars to hush up the rumor of their own misadventures. These were the reasons which, added to the fatigue, caused Andrea to sleep so soundly. In order that he might wake early, he did not close the shutters, but contented himself with bolting the door. He placed on the table an unclasped and long-pointed knife, whose temper he well knew, and which was never absent from him. About seven in the morning Andrea was awakened by a ray of sunlight, which, warm and brilliant, played upon his face. In all well-organized brains, the predominating idea—and there always is one—is sure to be the last thought before sleeping, and the first upon waking in the morning. Andrea had scarcely opened his eyes when his predominating idea presented itself, and whispered in his ear that he had slept too long. He jumped out of bed and ran to the window. A gendarme was crossing the court. A gendarme is one of the most striking objects in the world, even to a man void of uneasiness; but for one who has a timid conscience, and with good cause, too, the yellow, blue, and white uniform is really very alarming.

“Why is that gendarme there?” asked Andrea of himself. Then all at once he replied with that logic which the reader has doubtless remarked in him, “There is nothing astonishing in seeing a gendarme at an inn; instead of being astonished, let me dress myself.” And the youth dressed himself with a rapidity his valet de chambre had failed to divest him of during the few months of fashionable life he had led in Paris.

“Good!” said Andrea, while dressing himself. “I’ll wait till he leaves, and then I’ll slip away.”

And, saying this, Andrea, who had now put on his boots and cravat, stole gently to the window, and a second time lifted up the muslin curtain. Not only was the first gendarme still there, but the young man now perceived

a second yellow, blue, and white uniform at the foot of the staircase, the only one by which he could descend, while a third, on horseback, holding a musket in his fist, was posted as a sentinel at the great street-door, which alone afforded the means of egress. This appearance of the third gendarme was particularly decisive, for a crowd of curious loungers was extended before him, effectually blocking the entrance to the hotel.

"They seek me!" was the first thought of Andrea. "*Diable!*"

A pallor overspread the young man's forehead, and he looked around him with anxiety. His room, like all those on the same floor, had but one outlet to the gallery in the sight of everybody.

"I am lost!" was his second thought; and, indeed, for a man in Andrea's situation, an arrest comprehended the assizes, the trial, and death—death without mercy or delay. For a moment he convulsively pressed his head within his hands, and during that brief period he became nearly mad with terror; but soon a ray of hope glanced through the crowd of thoughts which bewildered his mind, and a faint smile played upon his white lips and pallid cheeks. He looked around, and saw the objects of his search upon the chimney-piece; they were a pen, ink, and paper. With forced composure he dipped the pen in the ink, and wrote the following lines upon a sheet of paper:

"I have no money to pay my bill, but I am not a dishonest man; I leave behind me as a pledge, this pin, worth ten times the amount. I shall be excused for escaping at daybreak, for I was ashamed."

He then drew the pin from his cravat and placed it on the paper. This done, instead of leaving the door fastened, he drew back the bolts, and even placed the door ajar, as though he had left the room, forgetting

to close it, and, sliding up the chimney like a man accustomed to those sort of gymnastic exercises—having effaced the very marks of his feet upon the floor—he commenced climbing the hollow tunnel which afforded him the only means of escape left. At this precise time, the first gendarme Andrea had noticed walked upstairs, preceded by the commissaire of police, and supported by the second gendarme, who guarded the staircase, and was himself re-enforced by the one stationed at the door. Andrea was indebted for this visit to the following circumstances: at daybreak the telegraphs were set at work in all directions; and almost immediately the authorities in every district had exerted their utmost endeavors to arrest the murderer of Caderousse. Compiègne, that royal residence and fortified town, is well furnished with authorities, gendarmes, and commissaires de police; they, therefore, commenced operations as soon as the telegraphic dispatch arrived; and the Bell and Bottle being the first hotel in the town, they had naturally directed their first inquiries there. Now, besides the reports of the sentinels guarding the Hôtel de Ville, which is next door to the Bell and Bottle, it had been stated that a number of travellers had arrived there during the night. The sentinel, who was relieved at six o'clock in the morning, remembered perfectly that just as he was taking his post, a few minutes past four, a young man arrived on horseback, with a little boy before him. The young man, having dismissed the boy and horse, knocked at the door of the hotel, which was opened and again closed after his entrance. This late arrival had attracted much suspicion, and the young man being no other than Andrea, the commissaire and gendarme, who was a brigadier, directed their steps towards his room. They found the door ajar.

“Oh! oh!” said the brigadier, who thoroughly understood the trick, “a bad sign to find the door open! I would rather find it triply bolted.”

And, indeed, the little note and pin upon the table con-

firmed, or rather supported, the sad truth. Andrea had fled. We say supported, because the brigadier was too experienced to yield to a single proof. He glanced around, looked in the bed, shook the curtains, opened the closets, and finally stopped at the chimney. Andrea had taken the precaution to leave no traces of his feet in the ashes, but still it was an outlet, and in this light was not to be passed over without serious investigation. The brigadier sent for some sticks and straw, and having filled the chimney with them, set a light to it. The fire crackled and the smoke ascended like the dull vapor from a volcano; but still no prisoner fell down as they expected. The fact was that Andrea, at war with society ever since his youth, was quite as deep as a gendarme, even though he were advanced to the rank of brigadier, and, quite prepared for the fire, he had reached the roof, and was crouching down against the chimney-pots. At one time he thought he was saved, for he heard the brigadier exclaim in a loud voice, to the two gendarmes, "He is not here," but, venturing to peep, he perceived that the latter, instead of retiring, as might have been reasonably expected upon this announcement, were watching with increased attention. It was now his turn to look about him. The Hôtel de Ville, a massive building of the sixteenth century, was on his right. Any one could descend from the openings in the tower and examine every corner of the roof below; and Andrea expected momentarily to see the head of a gendarme appear at one of these openings. If once discovered, he knew he would be lost, for a chase on the roofs afforded no chance of success. He therefore resolved to descend, not through the same chimney by which he arrived, but by a similar one conducting to another room. He looked around for a chimney from which no smoke issued, and having reached it, he disappeared through the orifice without being seen by any one. At the same minute one of the little windows of the Hôtel de Ville was thrown

open, and the head of a gendarme appeared. For an instant it remained motionless as one of the stone decorations of the building; then, after a long sigh of disappointment, the head disappeared. The brigadier, calm and dignified as the law he represented, passed through the crowd without answering the thousand questions addressed to him, and re-entered the hotel.

"Well?" asked the two gendarmes.

"Well, my boys," said the brigadier, "the brigand must really have escaped early this morning; but we will send to the road of Villers-Coterets and Noyon, and search the forest, when we shall catch him no doubt."

The honorable functionary had scarcely expressed himself thus, in that intonation which is peculiar to the brigadiers of the gendarmerie, when a loud scream, accompanied by the violent ringing of a bell, resounded through the court of the hotel.

"Ah! what is that?" cried the brigadier.

"Some traveller seems impatient," said the host. "What number was it rang?"

"No. 3."

"Run, waiter."

At this moment the screams and ringing were redoubled.

"Ah!" said the brigadier, stopping the servant; "the person who is ringing appears to want something more than a waiter; we will attend to him with a gendarme. Who occupies No. 3?"

"The little fellow who arrived last night in a post-chaise with his sister, and who asked for a double-bedded room."

The bell here rang for a third time, with another shriek full of anguish.

"Follow me, M. le Commissaire," said the brigadier; "tread in my steps."

"Wait a moment," said the host; "No. 3 has two staircases, an interior and an exterior."



"Good!" said the brigadier. "I will take charge of the interior. Are the carbines loaded?"

"Yes, brigadier."

"Well, you guard the exterior, and if he attempts to fly, fire upon him; he must be a great criminal, from what the telegraph says."

The brigadier, followed by the commissaire, disappeared by the interior staircase, accompanied by the noise which his assertion respecting Andrea had excited in the crowd. This is what had happened: Andrea had very cleverly managed to descend two-thirds of the chimney; but then his foot slipped, and notwithstanding his endeavors, he came into the room with more speed and noise than he intended. It would have signified little had the room been empty, but, unfortunately, it was occupied. Two ladies, sleeping in one bed, were awakened by the noise, and fixing their eyes upon the spot whence the sound proceeded, they saw a man. One of these ladies, the fair one, uttered those terrible shrieks which resounded through the house, while the other, rushing to the bell-rope, rang with all her strength. Andrea, as we can see, was surrounded by misfortune.

"For pity's sake!" he cried, pale and bewildered, without seeing whom he was addressing — "for pity's sake, do not call assistance! Save me! I will not harm you!"

"Andrea, the murderer!" cried one of the ladies.

"Eugenie! Mademoiselle Danglars!" exclaimed Andrea, stupefied.

"Help! help!" cried Mademoiselle d'Armilly, taking the bell from her companion's hand and ringing it yet more violently.

"Save me, I am pursued!" said Andrea, clasping his hands. "For pity, for mercy's sake do not deliver me up!"

"It is too late, they are coming!" said Eugenie.

"Well, conceal me somewhere; you can say you were

needlessly alarmed; you can turn their suspicions, and save my life!"

The two ladies pressing closely to one another, and drawing the bed-clothes tightly around them, remained silent to this supplicating voice; all their repugnance, all their fear rose in their imaginations.

"Well, be it so," at length said Eugenie; "return by the same road you came, and we will say nothing about you, unhappy wretch."

"Here he is!" cried a voice on the landing-place; "here he is! I see him!"

The brigadier had put his eye to the keyhole, and had perceived Andrea standing and entreating. A violent blow from the butt-end of the musket burst open the lock, two more forced out the bolts, and the broken door fell in. Andrea ran to the other door, leading to the gallery, ready to rush out; but he was stopped short; and he stood with his body a little thrown back, pale, and with the useless knife in his clinched hand.

"Fly then!" cried Mademoiselle d'Armilly, whose pity returned as her fears diminished, "fly!"

"Or kill yourself!" said Eugenie, in a tone which a Vestal in the circle would have used, while ordering the victorious gladiator to finish his vanquished adversary.

Andrea shuddered, and looked on the young girl with an expression which proved how little he understood such ferocious honor.

"Kill myself!" he cried, throwing down his knife; "why should I do so?"

"Why, you said," answered Mademoiselle Danglars, "that you would be condemned to die like the worst criminals."

"Bah!" said Cavalcanti, crossing his arms, "one has friends."

The brigadier advanced to him, sword in hand.

"Come, come," said Andrea, "sheathe your sword, my fine fellow; there is no occasion to make such a fuss,

since I yield myself;" and he held out his hands to be manacled.

The two girls looked with horror upon his horrid metamorphosis—the man of the world shaking off his covering and appearing the galley-slave. Andrea turned towards them, and with an impertinent smile, asked :

"Have you any message for your father, Mademoiselle Danglars? for in all probability I shall return to Paris."

Eugenie covered her face with her hands.

"Oh! oh!" said Andrea, "you need not be ashamed, even though you did post after me. Was I not nearly your husband?"

And with this raillery Andrea went out, leaving the two girls a prey to their own sufferings of shame, and to the commentaries of the crowd. An hour after they stepped into their calèche, both dressed in female attire. The gate of the hotel had been closed to screen them from sight; but they were forced, when the door was opened, to pass through a throng of curious glances and whispering voices. Eugenie closed her eyes; but though she could not see, she could hear, and the sneers of the crowd reached her in the carriage.

"Oh! why is not the world a wilderness?" she exclaimed, throwing herself into the arms of Mademoiselle d'Armilly, her eyes sparkling with the same kind of rage which made Nero wish that the Roman world had but one neck, that he might sever it at a single blow. The next day they stopped at the Hôtel de Flandre, at Brussels. The same evening Andrea was secured in the Conciergerie.

## CHAPTER XCIX.

## THE LAW.

WE have seen how quietly Mademoiselle Danglars and Mademoiselle d'Armilly accomplished their transformation and flight; the fact being that every one was too much occupied in their own affairs to think of theirs. We will leave the banker contemplating the enormous columns of his debts before the phantom of bankruptcy, and follow the baroness, who, after remaining for a moment as if crushed under the weight of the blow which had struck her, had gone to seek her usual adviser, Lucien Debray. The baroness had looked forward to this marriage as a means of ridding her of a guardianship which, over a girl of Eugenie's character, could not fail to be rather a troublesome undertaking; for in those tacit understandings which maintain the bond of family union, the mother is only really the mistress of her daughter, upon the condition of continually presenting herself to her as a model of wisdom and type of perfection. Now, Madame Danglars feared the penetration of Eugenie and the advice of Mademoiselle d'Armilly; she had frequently observed the contemptuous expression with which her daughter looked upon Debray—an expression which seemed to imply that she understood all her mother's amorous and pecuniary relationships with the intimate secretary; moreover, she saw that Eugenie detested Debray, not only because he was a cause of dissension and scandal in the paternal roof, but because she had at once classed him in that catalogue of bipeds whom Plato endeavors to withdraw from the appellation of men, and whom Diogenes

designated as animals upon two legs, without feathers. Unfortunately, in this world of ours, each person views things through a certain medium, which prevents his seeing them in the same light as others; and Madame Danglars, therefore, very much regretted that the marriage of Eugenie had not taken place, not only because the match was good, and likely to insure the happiness of her child, but because it would also set her at liberty. She ran, therefore, to Debray's, who, after having like the rest of Paris witnessed the contract-scene and the scandal attending it, had retired in haste to his club, where he was chatting with some friends upon the events, which served as a subject of conversation for three-fourths of that city known as the capital of the world. At the precise time when Madame Danglars, dressed in black and concealed in a long veil, was ascending the stairs leading to the apartments of Debray, notwithstanding the assurances of the young man that his master was not at home, Debray was occupied in repelling the insinuations of a friend, who tried to persuade him that after the terrible scene which had just taken place he ought, as a friend of the family, to marry Mademoiselle Danglars and her two millions. Debray did not defend himself very warmly, for the idea had sometimes crossed his mind; still, when he recollected the independent, proud spirit of Eugenie, he positively rejected it as utterly impossible, though the same thought again continually recurred, and found a resting-place in his heart. Tea, play, and the conversation, which had become interesting during the discussion of such serious affairs, lasted till one o'clock in the morning.

Meanwhile Madame Danglars, veiled and fainting, awaited the return of Debray in the little green room, seated between two baskets of flowers, which she had that morning sent, and which, it must be confessed, Debray had himself arranged and watered with so much care that his absence was half excused in the eyes of the poor woman. At forty minutes past eleven, Madame Danglars, tired of

waiting, returned home. Women of a certain grade are like grisettes in one respect, they seldom return home after twelve o'clock. The baroness returned to the hotel with as much caution as Eugenie used in leaving it; she ran lightly upstairs, and with an aching heart entered her apartment, contiguous, as we know, to that of Eugenie. She was very fearful of exciting any remark, and believed firmly in her daughter's innocence and fidelity to her paternal roof. She listened at Eugenie's door; then, hearing no sound, she tried to enter, but the bolts were drawn. Madame Danglars fancied that, fatigued with the terrible excitement of the evening, she had retired to her bed and slept. She called her lady's-maid and questioned her.

"Mademoiselle Eugenie," she said, "retired to her apartment with Mademoiselle d'Armilly; they then took tea together, after which they desired me to leave, saying they required me no longer." Since then the lady's-maid had been below, and like every one else, she thought the young ladies were in their own room; Madame Danglars, therefore, went to bed without a shadow of suspicion, and began to muse over the past events. In proportion as her ideas became clearer, so did occurrences at the scene of the contract increase in magnitude; it no longer appeared mere confusion; it was a tumult; it was no longer something distressing, but disgraceful. And then the baroness remembered that she had felt no pity for poor Mercedes, who had been afflicted with as severe a blow through her husband and son.

"Eugenie," she said to herself, "is lost and so are we. The affair, as it will be reported, will cover us with shame; for in society such as ours satire inflicts a painful and incurable wound. How fortunate that Eugenie is possessed of that strange character which has so often made me tremble." And her glance was turned towards heaven, where that mysterious Providence disposes all things, and out of a fault, nay, even a vice, sometimes produces a blessing. And then her thoughts, cleaving through space

as a bird in the air, rested on Cavalcanti. This Andrea was a wretch, a robber, an assassin, and yet his manners indicated a sort of education, if not a complete one; he had been presented to the world with the appearance of an immense fortune, supported by an honorable name. How could she extricate herself from this labyrinth? To whom could she apply to help her out of this painful situation? Debray, to whom she had run, with the first instinct of a woman towards the man she loves, and who yet betrays her — Debray could but give her advice; she must apply to some one more powerful than he. The baroness then thought of M. de Villefort. It was M. de Villefort who had caused Cavalcanti to be arrested; it was M. de Villefort who had remorselessly brought misfortune into her family, as though they had been strangers. But no; on reflection the procureur du roi was not a merciless man; and it was the magistrate, slave to his duties, the friend, and loyal friend, who, roughly but firmly, cut into the very core of the corruption; it was not the executioner, but the surgeon, who wished to withdraw the honor of Danglars from the ignominious association with the lost young man they had presented to the world as their son-in-law. From the moment that Villefort, the friend of Danglars, acted thus, no one could suppose that the banker had been previously acquainted with, or had lent himself to, any of the intrigues of Andrea. The conduct of Villefort, therefore, upon reflection, appeared to the baroness as if shaped for their mutual advantage. But the inflexibility of the procureur du roi should stop there; she would see him the next day, and if she could not make him fail in his duties as a magistrate, she would, at least, obtain all the indulgence he could allow. She would invoke the past, recall old recollections; she would supplicate him by the remembrance of guilty yet happy days. M. de Villefort would stifle the affair; he had only to turn his eyes on one side, and allow Andrea to fly, and only pursue the crime under

that shadow of guilt called contempt of court. After thus reasoning, she slept easily.

At nine o'clock next morning she rose, and without ringing for her maid, or giving the least sign of her existence, she dressed herself in the same simple style as on the previous night; then running downstairs, she left the hotel, walked to the Rue de Provence, called a *fiacre*, and drove to M. de Villefort's house. For the last month this wretched house presented the gloomy appearance of a lazaretto infected with the plague. Some of the apartments were closed within and without; the shutters were only opened to admit a minute's air, showing the scared face of a footman, and immediately afterward the window would be closed, like a gravestone falling on a sepulchre; and the neighbors would say to each other in a low voice, "Shall we to-day see another bier leave the house of M. le procureur du roi?"

Madame Danglars involuntarily shuddered at the aspect of the desolate house; descending from the *fiacre*, she approached the door with trembling knees, and rang the bell. Three times did the bell ring with a dull, heavy sound, seeming to participate in the general sadness, before the concierge appeared and peeped through the door, which he opened just wide enough to allow his words to be heard. He saw a lady, a fashionable, elegantly dressed lady, and yet the door remained almost closed.

"Do you intend opening the door?" said the baroness.

"First, madame, who are you?"

"Who am I? You know me well enough."

"We no longer know any one, madame."

"You must be mad, my friend," said the baroness.

"Where do you come from?"

"Oh! this is too much!"

"Madame, these are my orders; excuse me. Your name?"



"The Baroness Danglars; you have seen me twenty times."

"Possibly, madame. And now, what do you want?"

"Oh, how extraordinary! I shall complain to M. de Villefort of the impertinence of his servants."

"Madame, this is precaution, not impertinence; no one enters here without an order from M. d'Avrigny, or without speaking to M. le procureur du roi."

"Well, my business is with M. le procureur du roi."

"Is it pressing business?"

"You can imagine so, since I have not even brought my carriage out yet. But enough of this; here is my card; take it to your master."

"Madame will await my return?"

"Yes; go."

The concierge closed the door, leaving Madame Danglars in the street. She had not long to wait; directly afterward the door was opened wide enough to admit her, and when she had passed through, it was again shut. Without losing sight of her for an instant, the concierge took a whistle from his pocket as soon as they entered the court and sounded it. The valet de chambre appeared on the doorsteps.

"You will excuse this poor fellow, madame," he said, as he preceded the baroness; "but his orders are precise, and M. de Villefort begged me to tell you he could not act otherwise than he has done."

In the court was a tradesman showing his merchandise who had been admitted with the same precautions. The baroness ascended the steps; she felt herself strongly infected with the sadness which, as it were, seemed to enlarge the circle of her own, and still guided by the valet de chambre, who never lost sight of her for an instant, she was introduced to the study of the magistrate. Preoccupied as Madame Danglars had been with the object of her visit, the treatment she had received from these underlings appeared to her so insulting that she began by

complaining of it. But Villefort, raising his head, bowed down by grief, looked up at her with so sad a smile that her complaints died upon her lips.

"Forgive my servants," he said, "for a terror I cannot blame them for; from being suspected, they have become suspicious."

Madame Danglars had often heard of the terror to which the magistrate alluded, but without the evidence of her own eyesight she could never have believed the sentiment had been carried so far.

"You, too, then are unhappy," she said.

"Yes, madame," replied the magistrate.

"Then you pity me?"

"Sincerely, madame."

"And you understand what brings me here?"

"You wish to speak to me about the circumstance which has just happened?"

"Yes, sir, a fearful misfortune."

"You mean a mischance."

"A mischance!" repeated the baroness.

"Alas! madame," said the procureur du roi with his imperturbable calmness of manner, "I consider those alone misfortunes which are irreparable."

"And do you suppose this will be forgotten?"

"Everything will be forgotten, madame," said Villefort; "your daughter will be married to-morrow, if not to-day — in a week, if not to-morrow. And I do not think you can regret the loss of the intended husband of your daughter."

Madame Danglars gazed on Villefort, stupefied to find him so almost insultingly calm.

"Am I come to a friend?" she asked in a tone full of mournful dignity.

"You know that you are, madame," said Villefort, whose pale cheeks became slightly flushed as he gave her the assurance. And truly this assurance carried him back to different events from those now occupying the baroness and him.

"Well, then, be more affectionate, my dear Villefort," said the baroness. "Speak to me not as a magistrate, but as a friend; and when I am in bitter anguish of spirit, do not tell me I ought to be gay." Villefort bowed.

"When I hear misfortune named, madame," he said, "I have within the last few months contracted the bad habit of thinking of my own, and then cannot help drawing up an egotistical parallel in my mind. This is the reason that by the side of my misfortunes yours appear to me mere mischances: this is why my dreadful position makes yours appear enviable. But this annoys you; let us change the subject. You were saying, madame ——"

"I came to ask you, my friend," said the baroness, "what will be done with this impostor."

"Impostor!" repeated Villefort; "certainly, madame, you appear to extenuate some cases and exaggerate others. Impostor, indeed! M. Andrea Cavalcanti, or rather M. Benedetto, is nothing more nor less than an assassin."

"Sir, I do not deny the justice of your correction; but the more severely you arm yourself against that unfortunate, the more deeply will you strike our family. Come, forget him for a moment, and, instead of pursuing him, let him fly."

"You are too late, madame, the orders are issued."

"Well, should he be arrested — do you think they will arrest him?"

"I hope so."

"If they should arrest him (I know that sometimes prisons afford means of escape), will you leave him in prison?"

The procureur du roi shook his head.

"At least keep him there till my daughter be married."

"Impossible, madame, justice has its formalities."

"What! even for me?" said the baroness, half jesting, half in earnest.

"For all, even for myself among the rest," replied Villefort.

"Ah!" exclaimed the baroness, without expressing the ideas which the exclamation betrayed.

Villefort looked at her with that piercing glance which read the secrets of the heart.

"Yes, I know what you mean," he said; "you allude to those terrible rumors spread abroad in the world, that all those deaths which have kept me in mourning for the last three months, and from which Valentine has only escaped by a miracle, have not happened by natural means."

"I was not thinking of that," replied Madame Danglars, quickly.

"Yes, you were thinking of it, and with justice. You could not help thinking of it, and saying to yourself, 'You, who pursue crime so vindictively, answer now, Why are there unpunished crimes in your dwelling?'"

The baroness became pale.

"You were saying this, were you not?"

"Well, I own it."

"I will answer you."

Villefort drew his armchair nearer to Madame Danglars; then resting both hands upon his desk, he said, in a voice more hollow than usual:

"There are crimes which remain unpunished because the criminals are unknown, and we might strike the innocent instead of the guilty; but when the culprits are discovered" [Villefort here extended his hand towards a large crucifix placed opposite to his desk] — "when they are discovered, I swear to you, by all I hold most sacred, that whoever they may be, they shall die. Now, after the oath I have just taken, and which I will keep, madame, dare you ask for mercy for that wretch?"

"But, sir, are you sure he is guilty as they say?"

"Listen; this is his description: 'Benedetto, condemned, at the age of sixteen, for five years to the galleys for forgery;' he promised well, as you see; first a runaway, then an assassin."

"And who is this wretch?"

"Who can tell? a vagabond, a Corsican."

"Has no one owned him?"

"No one; his parents are unknown."

"But who was the man who brought him from Lucca?"

"Another rascal like himself — perhaps his accomplice."

The baroness clasped her hands.

"Villefort!" she exclaimed, in her softest and most captivating manner.

"For Heaven's sake, madame," said Villefort, with a firmness of expression not altogether free from harshness — "for Heaven's sake, do not ask pardon of me for a guilty wretch. What am I? The law. Has the law any eyes to witness your grief? Has the law ears to be melted by your sweet voice? Has the law a memory for all those soft recollections you endeavor to recall? No, madame, the law has commanded, and when it commands, it strikes. You will tell me that I am a living being, and not a code; a man, and not a volume. Look at me, madame, look around me. Have mankind treated me as a brother? Have they loved me? Have they spared me? Has any one shown the mercy towards me that you now ask at my hands? No, madame, they struck me — always struck me! Woman! siren that you are, do you persist in fixing on me that fascinating eye, which reminds me that I ought to blush? Well, be it so, let me blush for the faults you know, and perhaps — for even more than those! But having sinned myself it may be more deeply than others, I never rest till I have torn the disguises from my fellow-creatures, and found out their weaknesses. I have always found — and more, I repeat with joy, with triumph — I have always found some proof of human perversity or error. Every criminal I condemn seems to me a living proof that I am not a hideous exception to the rest. Alas! alas! all the world is wicked, — let us therefore strike at wickedness."

Villefort pronounced these last words with a feverish rage, which gave a ferocious eloquence to his words.

"But," said Madame Danglars, resolving to make a last effort, "this young man, though a murderer, is an orphan, abandoned by everybody."

"So much the worse, or rather so much the better; it has been so ordained that he may have none to weep his fate."

"But this is trampling on the weak, sir."

"The weakness of a murderer!"

"His dishonor reflects upon us."

"Is not death in my house?"

"Oh, sir," exclaimed the baroness, "you are without pity for others. Well, then, I tell you they will have no mercy on you!"

"Be it so!" said Villefort, raising his arms to heaven.

"At least delay the trial till the next assizes; we shall then have six months before us."

"No, madame," said Villefort; "instructions have been given; here are yet five days left; five days are more than I require. Do you not think that I also long for forgetfulness? While working night and day, I sometimes lose all recollection of the past, and then I experience the same sort of happiness I can imagine the dead to feel; still it is better than suffering."

"But, sir, he has fled; let him escape; inaction is a pardonable offence."

"I tell you it is too late; early this morning the telegraph was employed, and at this very minute ——"

"Sir," said the valet de chambre, entering the room, "a dragoon has brought this dispatch from the Minister of the Interior."

Villefort seized the letter, and hastily unsealed it. Madame Danglars trembled with fear; Villefort started with joy.

"Arrested!" he exclaimed: "he was taken at Compiegne, and all is over."

Madame Danglars rose from her seat, pale and cold.

"Adieu, sir!" she said.

“Adieu, madame,” replied the procureur du roi, as in an almost joyful manner he conducted her to the door. Then, turning to his desk, he said, striking the letter with his right hand, “Come; I had a forgery, three robberies, and two incendiaries; I only wanted a murder, and here it is: it will be a splendid session.”

## CHAPTER C.

## THE APPARITION.

As the procureur du roi had told Madame Danglars, Valentine was not as yet recovered. Bowed down with fatigue, she was indeed confined to her bed, and it was in her own room, and from the lips of Madame de Villefort, that she heard all the strange events we have related; we mean the flight of Eugenie and the arrest of Andrea Cavalcanti, or rather Benedetto, together with the accusation of murder pronounced against him. But Valentine was so weak that this recital scarcely produced the same effect it would have done had she been in her usual state of health. Indeed, her brain was only a seat of vague ideas; and confused forms, mingled with strange fancies, alone presented themselves before her eyes. During the day-time Valentine's perceptions remained tolerably clear, owing to the constant presence of M. Noirtier, who caused himself to be carried to his granddaughter's room, and watched her with his paternal tenderness; Villefort, also, on his return from the Palais, frequently passed an hour or two with his father and child. At six o'clock Villefort retired to his study, at eight M. d'Avrigny arrived himself, bringing the night draught prepared for the young girl, and then M. Noirtier was carried away. A nurse of the doctor's succeeded them, and never left until about ten or eleven o'clock, when Valentine was asleep. As she went downstairs, she gave the keys of Valentine's room to M. Villefort, so that no one could reach the sick-room excepting through that of Madame de Villefort and little Edward. Every morning Morrel called on Noirtier to receive news



of Valentine, and, extraordinary as it seemed, each day found him less uneasy. Certainly, though Valentine still labored under dreadful nervous excitement, she was better, and, moreover, Monte-Cristo had told him, when, half distracted, he had rushed to his house, that if she were not dead in two hours she was saved. Now four days had elapsed, and Valentine still lived. The nervous excitement of which we speak pursued Valentine even in her sleep, or rather in that state of somnolence which succeeded her waking hours; it was then in the silence of night, in the dim light shed from the alabaster lamp on the chimney-piece that she saw those shadows pass and repass which hover over the bed of sickness and fan the fever with their trembling wings. First she fancied she saw her step-mother threatening her, then Morrel stretched his arms towards her; sometimes mere strangers, like the Count of Monte-Cristo, appeared to visit her; even the very furniture, in these moments of delirium, seemed to move. This state lasted till about three o'clock in the morning, when a deep, heavy slumber overcame the young girl, from which she did not awake till morning. On the evening of the day which Valentine had learned of the flight of Eugenie, and the arrest of Benedetto, Villefort having retired as well as Noirtier and D'Avrigny, her thoughts wandered in a confused maze, alternately reviewing her own situation and the events she had just heard.

Eleven o'clock had struck. The nurse, having placed the beverage prepared by the doctor within reach of the patient, and locked the door, was listening with terror to the comments of the servants in the kitchen, and storing her memory with all the horrible stories which had for some months past amused the occupants of the antechambers in the house of the procureur du roi. Meanwhile an unexpected scene was passing in the room which had been so carefully locked.

Ten minutes had lapsed since the nurse had left; Valentine, who for the last hour had been suffering from the

fever which returned nightly, incapable of controlling her ideas, was forced to yield to the excitement which exhausted itself in producing and reproducing a succession and recurrence of the same fancies and images. The night-lamp threw out countless rays, each resolving itself into some strange form to her disordered imagination, when, suddenly, by its flickering light, Valentine thought she saw the door of her library, which was in the recess by the chimney-piece, open slowly, though she in vain listened to the sound of the hinges on which it turned. At any other time Valentine would have seized the silken bell-pull and summoned assistance, but nothing astonished her in her present situation. Her reason told her that all the visions she beheld were but the children of her imagination, and the conviction was strengthened by the fact that in the morning no traces remained of the nocturnal phantoms, who disappeared with the daylight. Behind the door a human figure appeared, but she was too familiar with such apparitions to be alarmed, and therefore only stared, hoping to recognize Morrel. The figure advanced towards the bed, and appeared to listen with profound attention. At this moment a ray of light glanced across the face of the midnight visitor.

"It is not he!" she murmured: and waited, in assurance of it being but a dream, for the man to disappear or assume some other form. Still she felt her pulse, and finding it throbbed violently, she remembered that the best method of dispelling such illusions was to drink, for a draught of the beverage prepared by the doctor to allay her fever seemed to cause a reaction of the brain, and for a short time she suffered less. Valentine, therefore, reached her hand towards the glass, but as soon as her trembling arm left the bed the apparition advanced more quickly towards her, and approached the young girl so closely, that she fancied she heard his breath and felt the pressure of his hand. This time the illusion, or rather the reality, surpassed anything Valentine had before experi-

enced; she began to believe herself really alive and awake, and the belief that her reason was this time not deceived made her shudder. The pressure she felt was evidently intended to arrest her arm, and she slowly withdrew it. Then the figure, from whom she could not detach her eyes, and who appeared more protecting than menacing, took the glass, and walking towards the night-light, held it up, as if to test its transparency. This did not seem sufficient; the man or rather the phantom—for he trod so softly that no sound was heard—then poured out about a spoonful into the glass and drank it. Valentine witnessed this scene with a sentiment of stupefaction. Every minute she had expected that it would vanish and give place to another vision; but the man, instead of dissolving like a shadow, again approached her, and said, in an agitated voice:

“Now you may drink.”

Valentine shuddered. It was the first time one of these visions had ever addressed her in a living voice, and she was about to utter an exclamation. The man placed his finger on her lips.

“The Count of Monte-Cristo!” she murmured.

It was easy to see that no doubt remained in the young girl’s mind as to the reality of the scene; her eyes started with terror, her hands trembled, and she rapidly drew the bed-clothes closer to her. Still the presence of Monte-Cristo at such an hour, his mysterious, fanciful, and extraordinary entrance into her room through the wall, might well seem impossibilities to her shattered reason.

“Do not call any one—do not be alarmed,” said the count; “do not let a shade of suspicion or uneasiness remain in your breast. The man standing before you, Valentine (for this time it is no phantom), is nothing more than the tenderest father and the most respectful friend you could dream of.”

Valentine could not reply; the voice which indicated the real presence of a being in the room alarmed her so

much, that she feared to utter a syllable; still the expression of her eyes seemed to inquire, "If your intentions are pure, why are you here?"

The count's marvellous sagacity understood all that was passing in the young girl's mind.

"Listen to me," he said, "or rather, look upon me; look at my face, paler even than usual, and my eyes, red with weariness; for four days I have not closed them, for I have been constantly watching you, to protect and preserve you for Maximilian!"

The blood mounted rapidly to the cheeks of Valentine, for the name just pronounced by the count dispelled all the fear with which his presence inspired her.

"Maximilian!" she exclaimed, and so sweet did the sound appear to her, that she repeated it—"Maximilian has he, then, owned all to you?"

"Everything. He told me your life was his, and I have promised him you shall live."

"You have promised him that I shall live?"

"Yes."

"But, sir, you spoke of vigilance and protection. Are you a doctor?"

"Yes, the best you can have at the present time, believe me."

"But you say you have watched," said Valentine, uneasily; "where have you been? I have not seen you."

The count extended his hand towards the library. "I was hidden behind that door," he said, "which leads into the next house, which I have rented."

Valentine turned her eyes away, and, with an indignant expression of pride and modest fear, exclaimed:

"Sir, I think you have been guilty of an unparalleled intrusion, and that which you call protection is more resembling an insult."

"Valentine," he answered, "during my long watch over you, all I have observed has been what people visited you, what nourishment was prepared, and what beverage was

served; and when the latter appeared dangerous to me, I entered, as I have now done, and substituted in the place of the poison a healthy draught, which, instead of producing the death intended, causes life to circulate in your veins."

"Poison! Death!" exclaimed Valentine, half believing herself under the influence of some feverish hallucination; "What are you saying, sir?"

"Hush! my child," said Monte-Cristo, again placing his finger upon her lips; "I did say poison and death. But drink some of this;" and the count took a bottle from his pocket containing a red liquid, of which he poured a few drops into a glass. "Drink this, and then take nothing more to-night."

Valentine stretched out her hand; but scarcely had she touched the glass than she drew it back in fear. Monte-Cristo took the glass, and drank half its contents, and then presented it to Valentine, who smiled, and swallowed the rest.

"Oh! yes," she exclaimed, "I recognize the flavor of my nocturnal beverage, which refreshed me so much and seemed to ease my aching brain. Thank you, sir, thank you!"

"This is how you have lived during the last four nights, Valentine," said the count. "But, oh! how I passed that time! Oh! the wretched hours I have endured! the torture to which I have submitted when I saw the deadly poison poured into your glass, and how I trembled lest you would drink it before I could find time to throw it away!"

"Sir," said Valentine, at the height of her terror, "you say you endured tortures when you saw the deadly poison poured into my glass; but if you saw this, you must also have seen the person who poured it?"

"Yes."

Valentine raised herself in bed, and drew over her chest, which appeared whiter than snow, the embroidered cam-

bric, still moist with the cold dew of delirium, to which were now added those of terror.

"You saw the person?" repeated the young girl.

"Yes," repeated the count.

"That which you tell me is horrible, sir. You wish to make me believe something too dreadful. What! attempt to murder me in my father's house — in my room — on my bed of sickness? Oh! leave me, sir, you are tempting me; you make me doubt the goodness of Providence; it is impossible — it cannot be!"

"Are you the first this hand has stricken? Have you not seen M. de Saint-Meran, Madame de Saint-Meran, Barrois, all fall? Would not M. Noirtier also have fallen a victim, had not the treatment he has been pursuing for the last three years neutralized the effects of the poison?"

"Oh, heavens!" said Valentine; "is this the reason why grandpapa has made me share all his beverages during the last month?"

"And have they all tasted of a slightly bitter flavor, like that of dried orange-peel?"

"Oh, yes! Oh, yes!"

"Then that explains all," said Monte-Cristo. "Your grandfather knows, then, that a poisoner lives here; perhaps he even suspects the person. He has been fortifying you, his beloved child, against the fatal effects of the poison, which would have failed from the constant habit of imbibing it. But even this would have availed little against a more deadly medium of death employed four days ago, which is generally but too fatal."

"But who, then, is this assassin — this murderer?"

"Let me also ask you a question. Have you never seen any one enter your room at night?"

"Oh! yes; I have frequently seen shadows pass close to me, approach, and disappear; but I took them for visions raised by my feverish imagination; and indeed,

when you entered, I thought I was under the influence of delirium."

"Then you do not know who it is that attempts your life?"

"No," said Valentine; "who could desire my death?"

"You shall know it now, then," said Monte-Cristo, listening.

"How do you mean?" said Valentine, looking terrified around.

"Because you are not feverish or delirious to-night, but thoroughly awake; midnight is striking, which is the hour which murderers choose."

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Valentine, wiping off the drops which ran down her forehead. Midnight struck slowly and sadly; every hour seemed to strike with leaden weight upon the heart of the poor girl.

"Valentine," said the count, "summon up all your courage; still the beatings of your heart; do not let a sound escape you, and feign to be asleep; then you will see."

Valentine seized the count's hand. "I think I hear a noise," she said; "leave me."

"Good-bye for the present," replied the count, walking upon tiptoe towards the library door, and smiling with an expression so sad and paternal that the young girl's heart was filled with gratitude. Before closing the door, he turned around once more, and said, "Not a movement—not a word; let them think you asleep; or, perhaps, you may be killed before I have the power of helping you." And with this fearful injunction the count disappeared through the door, which noiselessly closed after him.

## CHAPTER CL.

## THE SERPENT.

VALENTINE was alone; two other clocks, slower than that of St. Philippe du Roule, struck the hour of midnight from different situations; and, excepting the rumbling of a few carriages, all was silent. Then Valentine's attention was engrossed by the clock in her room, which marked the seconds. She began counting them, remarking that they were much slower than the beatings of her heart; and still she doubted: the inoffensive Valentine could not imagine any one desiring her death. Why should they? To what end? What had she done to excite the malice of an enemy? There was no fear of her falling asleep. One terrible idea pressed upon her mind, that some one existed in the world who had attempted to assassinate her, and who was about to endeavor to do so again. Supposing this person, wearied of the inefficacy of the poison, should, as Monte-Cristo said, have recourse to steel? What if the count should have no time to run to her rescue! What if her last moments were approaching, and she would never again see Morrel! When this terrible chain of ideas presented itself, Valentine was nearly persuaded to ring the bell and call for help. But through the door she fancied she saw the luminous eye of the count—that eye which lived in her memory, and the recollection overwhelmed her with so much shame, that she asked herself whether any amount of gratitude could ever repay his dangerous and devoted friendship. Twenty minutes—twenty tedious



minutes passed thus, then ten more, and at last the clock struck the half hour. Just then the sound of finger-nails grating against the door of the library informed Valentine that the count was still watching, and recommended her to do the same; at the same time, on the opposite side, that is towards Edward's room, Valentine fancied she heard the creaking of the floor; she listened attentively, holding her breath till she was nearly suffocated; the lock turned, and the door slowly opened.

Valentine had raised herself upon her elbow, and had scarcely time to throw herself down on the bed and shade her eyes with her arm: then, trembling, agitated, and her heart beating with indescribable terror, she waited the event.

Some one approached the bed and undrew the curtains. Valentine summoned every effort, and breathed with that regular respiration which announces tranquil sleep.

"Valentine!" said a low voice.

Still silent: Valentine had promised not to awake. Then everything remained still, excepting that Valentine heard the almost noiseless sound of some liquid being poured into the glass she had just emptied. Then she ventured to open her eyelid, and glance over her extended arm. She saw a female in a white dressing-gown pouring a liquor from a vial into her glass. During this short time Valentine must have held her breath, or moved in some slight degree, for the woman, disturbed, stopped and leaned over the bed, in order the better to ascertain whether Valentine slept; it was Madame de Villefort.

On recognizing her step-mother, Valentine could not repress a shudder, which caused a vibration in the bed. Madame de Villefort instantly stepped back close to the wall, and there, shaded by the bed-curtains, she silently and attentively watched the slightest movement of Valentine. The latter recollected the terrible caution of Monte-Cristo; she fancied that the hand not holding the vial clasped a long, sharp knife. Then collecting all her re-

maining strength, she forced herself to close her eyes; but this simple operation upon the most delicate organs of our frame, generally so easy to accomplish, became almost impossible at this moment, so much did curiosity struggle to retain the eyelid open and learn the truth.

Madame de Villefort, however, reassured by the silence, which was alone disturbed by the regular breathing of Valentine, again extended her hand, and half hidden by the curtains, succeeded in emptying the contents of the vial into the glass. Then she retired so gently that Valentine did not know that she had left the room. She only witnessed the withdrawal of that arm — the fair round arm of a woman but twenty-five years old, and who yet spread death around her.

It is impossible to describe the sensations experienced by Valentine during the minute and a half Madame de Villefort remained in the room. The grating against the library-door roused the young girl from the state of stupor in which she was plunged, and which almost amounted to insensibility. She raised her head with an effort. The noiseless door again turned on its hinges, and the Count of Monte-Cristo reappeared.

"Well," said he, "do you still doubt?"

"Oh!" murmured the young girl.

"Have you seen?"

"Alas!"

"Did you recognize?"

Valentine groaned. "Oh, yes!" she said, "I saw, but I cannot believe!"

"Would you rather die, then, and cause Maximilian's death?"

"Oh!" repeated the young girl, almost bewildered, "can I not leave the house? — can I not escape?"

"Valentine, the hand which now threatens you will pursue you everywhere, your servants will be seduced with gold, and death will be offered to you disguised in every shape. You will find it in the water you drink

from the spring, in the fruit which you pluck from the trees."

"But did you not say that my kind grandfather's precaution had neutralized the poison?"

"Yes, but not against a strong dose; the poison will be changed and the quantity increased."

He took the glass and raised it to his lips.

"It is already done," he said; "*brucine* is no longer employed, but a simple narcotic! I can recognize the flavor of the alcohol in which it has been dissolved. If you had taken that which Madame de Villefort has poured into your glass, Valentine! Valentine! you would have been lost!"

"But," exclaimed the young girl, "why am I thus pursued?"

"How! are you so kind, so good, so unsuspecting of ill, that you cannot understand, Valentine?"

"No, I have never injured her."

"But you are rich, Valentine; you have 200,000 livres a year, and you prevent her son from enjoying these 200,000 livres."

"How so? The fortune is not her gift, but is inherited from my relations."

"Certainly; and this is why M. and Madame de Saint-Meran have died; that is why M. Noirtier was sentenced the day he made you his heiress; this is why you, in your turn, are to die; it is because your father would inherit your property, and your brother, his only son, succeed to his."

"Edward! Poor child! are all these crimes committed on his account?"

"Ah! then you at length understand?"

"Heaven grant that this may not be visited upon him!"

"Valentine, you are an angel!"

"But why is my grandfather allowed to live?"

"It was considered that, you dead, the fortune would

naturally revert to your brother, unless he were disinherited; and besides, the crime appearing useless, it would be folly to commit it."

"And is it possible that this frightful combination of crimes has been invented by a woman?"

"Do you recollect in the arbor of the Hôtel des Postes, at Perusa, seeing a man in a brown cloak, whom your step-mother was questioning upon *aqua tofana*? Well, ever since then, the infernal project has been ripening in her brain."

"Ah, then, indeed, sir," said the sweet girl, bathed in tears, "I see that I am condemned to die!"

"No, Valentine, for I have foreseen all their plots; no, your enemy is conquered since we know her, and you will live, Valentine — live to be happy yourself, and to confer happiness upon a noble heart; but to insure this you must rely on me."

"Command me, sir — what am I to do?"

"You must blindly take what I give you."

"Alas! were it only for my own sake, I should prefer to die!"

"You must not confide in any one — not even in your father."

"My father is not engaged in this fearful plot; is he, sir?" asked Valentine, clasping her hands.

"No; and yet your father, a man accustomed to judicial accusations, ought to have known that all these deaths have not happened naturally; it is he who should have watched over you, he should have occupied my place — he should have emptied that glass — he should have risen against the assassin! Spectre against spectre!" he murmured in a low voice, as he concluded his sentence.

"Sir," said Valentine, "I will do all I can to live, for there are two beings whose existence depends upon mine — my grandfather and Maximilian."

"I will watch over them as I have over you."

"Well, sir, do as you will with me:" and then she

added, in a low voice, "Oh, heavens! what will befall me?"

"Whatever may happen, Valentine, do not be alarmed; though you suffer, though you lose sight, hearing, consciousness, fear nothing; though you should awake and be ignorant where you are, still do not fear; even though you should find yourself in a sepulchral vault, or coffin. Reassure yourself, then, and reflect: 'At this moment a friend, a father, who lives for my happiness and that of Maximilian, watches over me!'"

"Alas! alas! what a fearful extremity!"

"Valentine, would you rather denounce your step-mother?"

"I would rather die a hundred times!—oh, yes, die!"

"No, you will not die; but will you promise me, whatever happens, that you will not complain, but hope?"

"I will think of Maximilian!"

"You are my own darling child, Valentine! I alone can save you, and I will!"

Valentine, in the extremity of her terror, joined her hands, for she felt that the moment had arrived to ask for courage, and began to pray; and while uttering little more than incoherent words, she forgot that her white shoulders had no other covering than her long hair, and that her heart could be seen beating through the lace of her night-dress. Monte-Cristo gently laid his hand on the young girl's arm, drew the velvet coverlid close to her throat, and said, with a paternal smile:

"My child, believe in my devotion to you as you believe in the goodness of Providence and the love of Maximilian."

Then he drew from his waistcoat-pocket the little emerald box, raised the golden lid, and took from it a pastille, about the size of a pea, which he placed in her hand. She took it, and looked attentively on the count; there was an expression on the face of her intrepid pro-

tector which commanded her veneration. She evidently interrogated him by her look.

"Yes," said he.

Valentine carried the pastille to her mouth, and swallowed it.

"And now, my dear child, adieu for the present. I will try and gain a little sleep, for you are saved."

"Go," said Valentine; "whatever happens, I promise you not to fear."

Monte-Cristo for some time kept his eyes fixed on the young girl, who gradually fell asleep, yielding to the effects of the narcotic the count had given her. Then he took the glass, emptied three parts of the contents in the fireplace, that it might be supposed Valentine had taken it, and replaced it on the table; then he disappeared after throwing a farewell glance on Valentine, who slept with the confidence and innocence of an angel.

## CHAPTER CII.

## VALENTINE.

THE night-light continued to burn on the chimney-piece, exhausting the last drops of oil which floated on the surface of the water; the globe of the lamp appeared of a reddish hue, and the flame, brightening before it expired, threw out those last flickerings which in an inanimate object have been so often compared with the last convulsions in a human frame; a dull and dismal light was shed over the bed-clothes and curtains surrounding the young girl. All noises in the street had ceased, and the silence was frightful. It was then that the door of Edward's room opened, and a head we have before noticed appeared in the glass opposite; it was Madame de Villefort, who came to witness the effects of the draught. She stopped in the doorway, listened for a moment to the flickering of the lamp, the only sound in that deserted room, and then advanced to the table, to see if Valentine's glass were empty. It was still about a quarter full, as we before stated. Madame de Villefort emptied the contents into the ashes, which she disturbed, that they might the more readily absorb the liquid; then she carefully rinsed the glass, and wiping it with her handkerchief, replaced it on the table. If any one could have looked into the room just then he would have noticed the hesitation with which Madame de Villefort approached the bed and looked fixedly on Valentine. The dim light, the profound silence, and the gloomy thoughts inspired by the hour, and still there by her own conscience, all combined to produce a

sensation of fear; the poisoner was terrified to contemplate her own work. At length she rallied, drew aside the curtain, and leaning over the pillow, gazed intently on Valentine. The young girl no longer breathed — no breath issued through the half-closed teeth; the white lips no longer quivered; the eyes appeared floating in a bluish vapor, and the long black lashes rested on a cheek white as wax. Madame de Villefort gazed upon the face so expressive even in its stillness; then she ventured to raise the coverlid, and press her hand upon the young girl's heart. It was cold and motionless. She only felt the pulsation in her own fingers, and withdrew her hand with a shudder. One arm was hanging out of the bed, that beautiful arm which seemed moulded by a sculptor; but the other appeared slightly distorted by convulsion, and the hand so delicately formed was resting with stiff and outstretched fingers on the framework of the bed. The nails, too, were turning blue. Madame de Villefort had no longer any doubt; all was over; she had consummated the last terrible work she had to accomplish. There was no more to do in the room, so the poisoner retired stealthily, as though fearing to hear the sound of her own footsteps; but as she withdrew she still held aside the curtain, absorbed in the irresistible attraction always offered by the picture of death, so long as it remains merely mysterious without exciting disgust.

Just then the lamp again flickered; the noise startled Madame de Villefort, who shuddered and dropped the curtain. Immediately afterward the light expired and the room was plunged in terrible obscurity, while the clock at that minute struck half-past four. Overpowered with agitation, the prisoner succeeded in groping her way to the door, and reached her room in an agony of fear. The darkness lasted two hours longer; then by degrees a cold light crept through the Venetian blinds, until at length it revealed the objects in the room. About this time the nurse's cough was heard on the stairs, and the



woman entered the room with a cup in her hand. To the tender eye of a father or a lover, the first glance would have sufficed to convince them of Valentine's state; but to this hireling, Valentine only appeared to sleep.

"Good!" she exclaimed, approaching the table, "she has taken part of her draught; the glass is three-quarters empty."

Then she went to the fireplace and lit the fire, and although she had but just left her bed, she could not resist the temptation offered by Valentine's sleep, so she threw herself into an armchair, to snatch a little more rest. The clock striking eight awoke her. Astonished at the prolonged sleep of the patient, and frightened to see that the arm was still hanging out of bed, she advanced towards Valentine, and for the first time noticed the white lips. She tried to replace the arm, but it moved with a frightful stiffness which could not deceive a sick-nurse. She screamed aloud; then running to the door, exclaimed:

"Help! help!"

"What do you mean?" asked M. d'Avrigny, at the foot of the stairs, it being the hour he usually visited her.

"What do you mean?" asked Villefort, rushing from his room. "Doctor, do you hear them call for help?"

"Yes, yes; let us hasten up; it was in Valentine's room."

But before the doctor and the father could reach the room the servants who were on the same floor had entered and seeing Valentine pale and motionless on her bed, they lifted up their hands towards heaven, and stood transfixed as though struck by lightning.

"Call Madame de Villefort! — wake Madame de Villefort!" cried the procureur du roi from the door of his chamber, which it seemed he scarcely dared to leave.

But instead of obeying him, the servants stood watching D'Avrigny, who ran to Valentine, and raised her in his arms.

"What! this one, too!" he exclaimed. "Oh! when will this cease?"

Villefort rushed into the room.

"What are you saying, doctor?" he exclaimed, raising his hands to heaven.

"I say that Valentine is dead!" replied D'Avrigny, in a voice terrible in its solemn calmness.

M. de Villefort staggered and buried his head in the bed. On the exclamation of the doctor and the cry of the father, the servants all fled with muttered imprecations; they were heard running down the stairs and through the long passages; then there was a rush in the court, afterwards all was still; they had, one and all, deserted the accursed house.

Just then, Madame de Villefort, in the act of slipping on her dressing-gown, threw aside the drapery, and for a moment remained still, as though interrogating the occupants of the room, while she endeavored to call up some rebellious tears. On a sudden she stepped, or rather bounded, with outstretched arms towards the table. She saw D'Avrigny curiously examining the glass, which she felt certain of having emptied during the night. It was now a third full, just as it was when she threw the contents into the ashes. The spectre of Valentine rising before the poisoner would have alarmed her less. It was, indeed, the same color as the draught she had poured into the glass, and which Valentine had drunk; it was indeed the poison, which could not deceive M. d'Avrigny, which he now examined so closely; it was doubtless a miracle from heaven that, notwithstanding her precautions, there should be some trace, some proof remaining to denounce the crime. While Madame de Villefort remained rooted to the spot like a statue of terror, and Villefort, with his head hidden in the bed-clothes, saw nothing around him, D'Avrigny approached the window, that he might the better examine the contents of the glass, and dipping the tip of his finger in, tasted it.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "it is no longer brucine that is used; let me see what it is!"

Then he ran to one of the cupboards in Valentine's room, which had been transformed into a medicine closet, and taking from its silver case a small bottle of nitric acid, dropped a little of it into the liquor, which immediately changed to a blood-red color.

"Ah!" exclaimed D'Avrigny, in a voice in which the horror of a judge unveiling the truth was mixed with the delight of a student discovering a problem. Madame de Villefort was overpowered; her eyes first flashed and then swam; she staggered towards the door and disappeared. Directly afterward the distant sound of a heavy weight falling on the ground was heard, but no one paid any attention to it; the nurse was engaged in watching the chemical analysis, and Villefort was still absorbed in grief. M. D'Avrigny alone had followed Madame de Villefort with his eyes, and watched her precipitate retreat. He lifted up the drapery over the entrance to Edward's room, and his eye reaching as far as Madame de Villefort's apartment, he beheld her extended lifeless on the floor.

"Go to the assistance of Madame de Villefort," he said to the nurse. "Madame de Villefort is ill."

"But Mademoiselle de Villefort—" stammered the nurse.

"Mademoiselle de Villefort no longer requires help," said D'Avrigny, "since she is dead."

"Dead — dead!" groaned forth Villefort, in a paroxysm of grief which was the more terrible from the novelty of the sensation in the iron heart of that man.

"Dead!" repeated a third voice. "Who said Valentine was dead?"

The two men turned around, and saw Morrel standing at the door, pale and terror-stricken.

This is what had happened. At the usual time Morrel had presented himself at the little door leading to Noirtier's room. Contrary to custom, the door was open, and,

having no occasion to ring, he entered. He waited for a moment in the hall, and called for a servant to conduct him to M. Noirtier; but no one answered, the servants having, as we know, deserted the house. Morrel had no particular reason for uneasiness; Monte-Cristo had promised him that Valentine should live; and, until then, he had always fulfilled his word. Every night the count had given him news, which was the next morning confirmed by Noirtier. Still, this extraordinary silence appeared strange to him, and he called a second and a third time; still no answer. Then he determined to go up.

Noirtier's room was open, like all the rest. The first thing he saw was the old man sitting in his armchair, in his usual place; but his eyes expressed an internal fright, which was confirmed by the pallor which overspread his features.

"How are you, sir?" asked Morrel, with a sickness of heart.

"Well!" answered the old man, by closing his eyes. But his appearance manifested increasing uneasiness.

"You are thoughtful, sir," continued Morrel; "you want something; shall I call one of the servants?"

"Yes," replied Noirtier.

Morrel pulled the bell, but, though he nearly broke the cord, no one answered. He turned towards Noirtier; the pallor and anguish expressed on his countenance momentarily increased.

"Oh!" exclaimed Morrel, "why do they not come? Is any one ill in the house?"

The eyes of Noirtier seemed as though they would start from their sockets.

"What is the matter? You alarm me. Valentine? Valentine?"

"Yes, yes," sighed Noirtier.

Maximilian tried to speak, but he could articulate nothing; he staggered, and supported himself against the wainscot. Then he pointed to the door.

"Yes, yes, yes!" continued the old man.

Maximilian rushed up the little staircase, while Noirtier's eye seemed to say:

"Quicker! quicker!"

In a minute the young man darted through several rooms, till at length he reached Valentine's. There was no occasion to push the door—it was wide open. A sob was the only sound he heard. He saw, as though in a mist, a black figure kneeling, and buried in a confused mass of white drapery. A terrible fear transfixed him. It was then he heard a voice exclaim, "Valentine is dead!" and another voice which like an echo, repeated:

"Dead! dead!"

## CHAPTER CIII.

## MAXIMILIAN.

VILLEFORT rose, half ashamed of being surprised in such a paroxysm of grief. The terrible office he had held for twenty-five years had succeeded in making him more or less than man. His glance, at first wandering, fixed itself upon Morrel.

"Who are you, sir," he asked, "who forget that this is not the manner to enter a house stricken with death? Go, sir, go!"

But Morrel remained motionless; he could not detach his eyes from that disordered bed, and the pale corpse of the young girl who was lying on it.

"Go!—do you hear?" said Villefort, while D'Avrigny advanced to lead Morrel out. Maximilian stared for a moment at the corpse, gazed all around the room, then upon the two men. He opened his mouth to speak; but finding it impossible to give utterance to the innumerable ideas that occupied his brain, he went out, thrusting his hands through his hair in such a manner that Villefort and D'Avrigny, for a moment diverted from the engrossing topic, exchanged glances, which seemed to convey —

"He is mad!"

But in less than five minutes the staircase groaned beneath an extraordinary weight. Morrel was seen carrying, with superhuman strength, the armchair containing Noirtier upstairs. When he reached the landing, he placed the armchair on the floor, and rapidly rolled it into Valentine's room. This could only have been accomplished by means of unnatural strength, supplied by powerful ex-

citement. But the most fearful spectacle was Noirtier being pushed towards the bed, his face expressing all his meaning, and his eyes supplying the want of every other faculty.

That pale face and flaming glance appeared to Villefort like a frightful apparition. Each time he had been brought into contact with his father something terrible had happened.

"See what they have done!" cried Morrel, with one hand leaning on the back of the chair, and the other extended towards Valentine. "See, my father, see!"

Villefort drew back, and looked with astonishment on the young man, who, almost a stranger to him, called Noirtier his father. At this moment the whole soul of the old man seemed centred in his eyes, which became blood-shot; the veins of the throat swelled; his cheeks and temples became purple, as though he were struck with epilepsy; nothing was wanting to complete this but the utterance of a cry. And the cry issued from his pores, if we may thus speak—a cry frightful in its silence. D'Avrigny rushed towards the old man and made him inhale a powerful restorative.

"Sir!" cried Morrel, seizing the moist hand of the paralytic, "they ask me who I am, and what right I have to be here. Oh! you know it; tell them—tell them!"

And the young man's voice was choked by sobs.

As for the old man, his chest heaved with his panting respiration. One could have thought he was undergoing the agonies preceding death. At length, happier than the young man, who sobbed without weeping, tears glistened in the eyes of Noirtier.

"Tell them," said Morrel, in a hoarse voice, "tell them I am her betrothed. Tell them she was my beloved, my noble girl, my only blessing in the world. Tell them—oh, tell them that corpse belongs to me!"

The young man, who presented the dreadful spectacle of a strong frame crushed, fell heavily on his knees

before the bed, which his fingers grasped with convulsive energy. D'Avrigny, unable to bear the sight of this touching emotion, turned away; and Villefort, without seeking any further explanation, and attracted towards him by the irresistible magnetism which draws us towards those who have loved the people for whom we mourn, extended his hand towards the young man. But Morrel saw nothing; he had grasped the hand of Valentine, and, unable to weep, vented his agony in gnawing the sheets. For some time nothing was heard in that chamber but sobs, exclamations and prayers. At length Villefort, the most composed of all, spoke.

"Sir," said he to Maximilian, "you say you loved Valentine — that you were betrothed to her. 'I knew nothing of this engagement, of this love; yet I, her father, forgive you, for I see your grief is real and deep; and, besides, my own sorrow is too great for anger to find a place in my heart. But you see the angel whom you hoped for has left this earth — she has nothing more to do with the adoration of men. Take a last farewell, sir, of her sad remains; take the hand you expected to possess once more within your own, and then separate yourself from her forever. Valentine now alone requires the priest who will bless her."

"You are mistaken, sir," exclaimed Morrel, raising himself on one knee, his heart pierced by a more acute pang than any he had yet felt — "you are mistaken; Valentine, dying as she has, not only requires a priest, but an avenger. *You*, M. de Villefort, send for the priest; *I* will be the avenger!"

"What do you mean, sir?" asked Villefort, trembling at the new idea inspired by the delirium of Morrel.

"I tell you, sir, that two persons exist in you: the father has mourned sufficiently, now let the procureur du roi fulfill his office."

The eyes of Noirtier glistened, and D'Avrigny approached.



"Gentlemen," said Morrel, reading all that passed through the minds of the witnesses to the scene, "I know what I am saying, and you know as well as I do what I am about to say — Valentine has been assassinated."

Villefort hung his head; D'Avrigny approached nearer; and Noirtier expressed "Yes" with his eyes.

"Now, sir," continued Morrel, "in these days no one can disappear by violent measures without some inquiries being made as to the cause of such disappearance, even were the victim not a young, beautiful, and adorable creature like Valentine. M. le Procureur du Roi," said Morrel, with increasing vehemence, "no mercy is allowed; I denounce the crime; it is your place to seek the assassin."

The young man's implacable eyes interrogated Villefort, who, on his side, glanced from Noirtier to D'Avrigny. But instead of finding sympathy in the eyes of the doctor and his father, he only saw an expression as inflexible as that of Maximilian.

"Yes!" indicated the old man.

"Assuredly!" said D'Avrigny.

"Sir," said Villefort, striving to struggle against this triple force and his own emotion — "sir, you are deceived; no one commits crimes here. I am stricken by fate. It is horrible, indeed, but no one assassinates."

The eyes of Noirtier lighted up with rage, and D'Avrigny prepared to speak. Morrel, however, extended his arm and commanded silence.

"And I say that murders *are* committed here," said Morrel, whose voice, though lower in tone, lost none of its terrible distinctness; "I tell you that this is the fourth victim within the last four months. I tell you, Valentine's life was attempted by poison four days ago, though she escaped, owing to the precautions of M. Noirtier! I tell you that the dose has been doubled, the poison changed, and that this time it has succeeded. I

tell you that you know these things as well as I do, since this gentleman has forewarned you, both as a doctor and a friend."

"Oh! you rave, sir!" exclaimed Villefort, in vain endeavoring to escape the net in which he was taken.

"I rave?" said Morrel; "well, then, I appeal to M. d'Avrigny himself. Ask him, sir, if he recollects some words he uttered in the garden of this hotel on the night of Madame de Saint-Meran's death. You thought yourselves alone, and talked about that tragical death, and the fatality you mentioned then is the same as that which has caused the murder of Valentine."

Villefort and D'Avrigny exchanged looks.

"Yes, yes," continued Morrel, "recall the scene, for the words you thought were only given to silence and solitude fell into my ears. Certainly, after witnessing the culpable indolence manifested by M. de Villefort towards his own relations, I ought to have denounced him to the authorities; then I should not have been an accomplice to thy death, as I now am, sweet, beloved Valentine; but the accomplice shall become the avenger. This fourth murder is apparent to all, and if thy father abandon thee, Valentine, it is I — and I swear it — that shall pursue the assassin."

And this time, as though nature had at last taken compassion on the vigorous frame, nearly bursting with its own strength, the words of Morrel were stifled in his throat; his breast heaved; the tears, so long rebellious, gushed from his eyes; and he threw himself, weeping, on his knees, by the side of the bed.

Then D'Avrigny spoke.

"And I, too," he exclaimed, in a low voice, "I unite with M. Morrel in demanding justice for crime; my blood boils at the idea of having encouraged a murderer by my cowardly concession!"

"Oh! merciful heavens!" murmured Villefort.

Morrel raised his head, and reading the eyes of the old man, which gleamed with unnatural lustre —

"Stay," he said, "M. Noirtier wishes to speak."

"Yes," indicated Noirtier, with an expression the more terrible from all his faculties being centred in his glance.

"Do you know the assassin?" asked Morrel.

"Yes," replied Noirtier.

"And you will direct us?" exclaimed the young man.

"Listen, M. d'Avrigny — listen!"

Noirtier looked upon Morrel with one of those melancholy smiles which had so often made Valentine happy, and thus fixed his attention. Then, having riveted the eyes of his interlocutor on his own, he glanced towards the door.

"Do you wish me to leave?" said Morrel, sadly.

"Yes," replied Noirtier.

"Alas! alas! sir, have pity on me!"

The old man's eyes remained fixed on the door.

"May I, at least, return?" asked Morrel.

"Yes."

"Must I leave alone?"

"No."

"Who am I to take with me? — M. le procureur du roi?"

"No."

"The doctor?"

"Yes."

"You wish to remain alone with M. de Villefort?"

"Yes."

"But can he understand you?"

"Yes."

"Oh!" said Villefort, inexpressibly delighted to think the inquiries were to be made *tête-à-tête* — "oh, be satisfied, I can understand my father."

D'Avrigny took the young man's arm, and led him out of the room. A more than death-like silence then reigned in the house. At the end of a quarter of an hour a faltering footstep was heard, and Villefort appeared at the door of the apartment where D'Avrigny and Morrel

been had staying, one absorbed in meditation, the other with grief.

"You can come!" he said, and led them back to Noirtier.

Morrel looked attentively on Villefort. His face was livid. Large drops rolled down his face; and in his fingers he held the fragments of a pen which he had torn to atoms.

"Gentlemen," he said, in a hoarse voice, "give me your word of honor that this horrible secret shall forever remain buried amongst yourselves!"

The two men drew back.

"I entreat you —" continued Villefort.

"But," said Morrel, "the culprit — the murderer — the assassin."

"Do not alarm yourself, sir; justice will be done," said Villefort. "My father has revealed the culprit's name; my father thirsts for revenge as much as you do, yet even he conjures you, as I do, to keep this secret. Do you not, father?"

"Yes," resolutely replied Noirtier.

Morrel suffered an exclamation of horror and surprise to escape him.

"Oh, sir!" said Villefort, arresting Maximilian by the arm, "if my father, the inflexible man, makes this request, it is because he knows, be assured, that Valentine will be terribly avenged. Is it not so, father?"

The old man made a sign in the affirmative. Villefort continued:

"He knows me, and I have pledged my word to him. Rest assured, gentlemen, that within three days, in a shorter time than justice would demand, the revenge I shall have taken for the murder of my child will be such as to make the boldest heart tremble;" and as he spoke these words he ground his teeth, and grasped the old man's senseless hand.

"Will this promise be fulfilled, M. Noirtier?" asked Morrel, while D'Avrigny looked inquiringly.

"Yes," replied Noirtier, with an expression of sinister joy.

"Swear, then," said Villefort, joining the hands of Morrel and D'Avrigny, "swear that you will spare the honor of my house, and leave me to avenge my child."

D'Avrigny turned around and uttered a very feeble "Yes;" but Morrel, disengaging his hand, rushed to the bed, and after having pressed the cold lips of Valentine with his own, hurriedly left, uttering a long deep groan of despair and anguish.

We have before stated that all the servants had fled. M. de Villefort was therefore obliged to request M. d'Avrigny to superintend all those arrangements consequent upon a death in a large city, more especially a death under such suspicious circumstances. It was something terrible to witness the silent agony, the mute despair, of Noirtier, whose tears silently rolled down his cheeks. Villefort retired to his study, and D'Avrigny left to summon the doctor of the mayoralty, whose office is to examine bodies after decease, and who is expressively named "the doctor of the dead."

M. Noirtier could not be persuaded to quit his grandchild. At the end of a quarter of an hour M. d'Avrigny returned with his associate; they found the outer gate closed, and not a servant remaining in the house; Villefort himself was obliged to open it. But he stopped on the landing—he had not the courage to revisit the room of death. The two doctors, therefore, entered the room alone. Noirtier was near the bed, pale, motionless, and silent as the corpse. The district doctor approached with the indifference of a man accustomed to spend half his time amongst the dead; he then lifted the sheet which was placed over the face, and just unclosed the lips.

"Alas!" said D'Avrigny, "she is indeed dead, poor child! You can leave."

"Yes," replied the doctor, laconically, dropping the sheet he had raised.

Noirtier uttered a kind of hoarse, rattling sound; the old man's eyes sparkled, and the good doctor understood that he wished to behold his child. He therefore approached the bed, and while his companion was dipping the fingers with which he had touched the lips of the corpse in chloride of lime, he uncovered that calm and pale face which looked like that of a sleeping angel.

A tear, which appeared in the old man's eye, expressed his thanks to the doctor. The doctor of the dead then laid his *procès-verbal* on the corner of the table, and having executed his office, was conducted out by D'Avrigny. Villefort met them at the door of his study; having, in a few words, thanked the district doctor, he returned to D'Avrigny and said:

"And now the priest!"

"Is there any particular priest you wish to pray with Valentine?" asked D'Avrigny.

"No!" said Villefort; "fetch the nearest."

"The nearest," said the district doctor, "is a good Italian abbé who lives next door to you. Shall I call on him as I pass?"

"D'Avrigny," said Villefort, "be so kind, I beseech you, as to accompany this gentleman. Here is the key of the door, so that you can go in and out as you please. You will bring the priest with you, and will oblige me by introducing him into my child's room."

"Do you wish to see him?"

"I only wish to be alone. You will excuse me, will you not? A priest can understand a father's grief." And M. de Villefort, giving the key to D'Avrigny, again bade farewell to the strange doctor, and retired to his study, where he began to work. For some temperaments work is a remedy for all afflictions.

As the doctors entered the street, they saw a man in a cassock standing on the threshold of the next door.

"This is the abbé of whom I spoke," said the doctor to D'Avrigny.

D'Avrigny accosted the priest.

"Sir," he said, "are you disposed to confer a great obligation on an unhappy father who has just lost his daughter? I mean M. de Villefort, the procureur du roi."

"Ah!" said the priest, in a marked Italian accent; "yes, I have heard that death is in that house."

"Then I need not tell you what kind of service he requires of you."

"I was about to offer myself, sir," said the priest; "it is our mission to forestall our duties."

"It is a young girl."

"I know it, sir; the servants who fled from the house informed me. I also know that her name is Valentine, and that I have already prayed for her."

"Thank you, sir," said D'Avrigny; "since you have commenced your sacred office, deign to continue it. Come and watch by the dead, and all the wretched family will be grateful to you."

"I am going, sir, and I do not hesitate to say that no prayers will be more fervent than mine."

D'Avrigny took the priest's hand, and, without meeting Villefort, who was engaged in his study, they reached Valentine's room, which on the following night was to be occupied by the undertakers. On entering the room, Noirtier's eyes met those of the abbé, and no doubt he read some particular expression in them, for he remained in the room. D'Avrigny recommended the attention of the priest to the living as well as to the dead, and the abbé promised to devote his prayers to Valentine and his attentions to Noirtier. In order, doubtless, that he might not be disturbed while fulfilling his sacred mission, the priest, as soon as D'Avrigny departed, rose, and not only bolted the door through which the doctor had just left, but also that leading to Madame de Villefort's room.

## CHAPTER CIV.

## DANGLARS'S SIGNATURE.

THE next morning rose sad and cloudy. During the night the undertakers had executed their melancholy office and folded the corpse in the winding-sheet, which, whatever may be said about the equality of death, is at least a last proof of the luxury so pleasing in life. This winding-sheet was nothing more than a beautiful piece of cambric which the young girl had bought a fortnight before. During the evening two men, engaged for the purpose, had carried Noirtier from Valentine's room into his own, and, contrary to all expectation, there was no difficulty in withdrawing him from his child. The Abbé Busoni had watched till daylight, and then left without calling any one. D'Avrigny returned about eight o'clock in the morning; he met Villefort on his way to Noirtier's room, and accompanied him to see how the old man had slept. They found him in a large armchair, which served him for a bed, enjoying a calm, nay, almost a smiling sleep. They both stood in amazement at the door.

"See," said D'Avrigny to Villefort, "nature knows how to alleviate the deepest sorrow. No one can say M. Noirtier did not love his child, and yet he sleeps."

"Yes, you are right," replied Villefort, surprised; "he sleeps indeed! and this is the more strange, since the least contradiction keeps him awake all night."

"Grief has stunned him," replied D'Avrigny; and they both returned thoughtfully to the study of the procureur du roi.



"See, I have not slept," said Villefort, showing his undisturbed bed; "grief does not stun me. I have not been in bed for two nights; but then look at my desk; see what I have written during these two days and nights. I have filled those papers, and have made out the accusation against the assassin Benedetto. Oh, work! my passion, my joy, my delight! it is for thee to alleviate my sorrows!" and he convulsively grasped the hand of D'Avrigny.

"Do you require my services now?" asked D'Avrigny.

"No," said Villefort, "only return again at eleven o'clock; at twelve the—the—oh, heavens! my poor, poor child!" and the procureur du roi, again becoming a man, lifted up his eyes and groaned.

"Shall you be present in the reception-room?"

"No; I have a cousin who has undertaken this sad office. I shall work, doctor; when I work I forget everything." And, indeed, no sooner had the doctor left the room, than he was again absorbed in study. On the doorstep D'Avrigny met the cousin whom Villefort had mentioned—a personage as insignificant in our story as in the world he occupied—one of those beings devoted from their birth to make themselves useful to others. He was punctual, dressed in black, with a crape around his hat, and presented himself at his cousin's with a face made up for the occasion, and which he could alter as might be required.

At twelve o'clock the mourning-coaches rolled into the paved court, and the Rue du Faubourg St. Honore was filled with a crowd of idlers, equally pleased to witness the festivities or the mourning of the rich, and who rush with the same avidity to a funeral procession as to the marriage of a duchess.

Gradually the reception-room filled, and some of our old friends made their appearance—we mean Debray, Château-Renaud, and Beauchamp, accompanied by all the leading men of the day at the bar, in literature, or the

army; for M. de Villefort moved in the first Parisian circles, less owing to his social position than to his personal merit. The cousin standing at the door ushered in the guests, and it was rather a relief to the indifferent to see a person as unmoved as themselves, and who did not exact a mournful face or forced tears, as would have been the case with a father, a brother, or a lover. Those who were acquainted soon formed into little groups. One of these was composed of Debray, Château-Renaud, and Beauchamp.

"Poor girl!" said Debray, like the rest, paying an involuntary tribute to the sad event—"poor girl! so young! so rich! so beautiful! Could you have imagined this scene, Château-Renaud, when we saw her, at the most three weeks ago, about to sign that contract?"

"Indeed, no!" said Château-Renaud.

"Did you know her?"

"I spoke to her once or twice at Madame de Morcerf's among the rest; she appeared to me charming, though rather melancholy. Where is her step-mother? Do you know?"

"She is spending the day with the worthy gentleman who is receiving us."

"Who is he?"

"Whom do you mean?"

"The gentleman who receives us. Is he a deputy?"

"Oh, no! I am condemned to witness those gentlemen every day," said Beauchamp, "but he is perfectly unknown to me."

"Have you mentioned this death in your paper?"

"It has been mentioned; but the article is not mine. Indeed, I doubt if it will please M. de Villefort, for it says that if four successive deaths had happened anywhere else than in the house of the procureur du roi, he would have interested himself somewhat more about them."

"Still," said Château-Renaud, "Doctor d'Avrigny, who attends my mother, declares he is in despair about it. But whom are you seeking, Debray?"

"I am seeking the Count of Monte-Cristo," said the young man.

"I met him on the Boulevard, on my road here," said Beauchamp. "I think he is about to leave Paris; he was going to his banker."

"His banker? Danglars is his banker, is he not?" asked Château-Renaud of Debray.

"I believe so," replied the secretary, with slight uneasiness. "But Monte-Cristo is not the only one I miss here I do not see Morrel."

"Morrel! Do you know him?" asked Château-Renaud. "I think he had only been introduced to Madame de Villefort."

"Still he ought to have been here," said Debray. "I wonder what will be talked about to-night; this funeral is the news of the day. But hush! here comes our minister of justice; he will feel obliged to make some little speech to the cousin." And the three young men drew near to listen.

Beauchamp told the truth when he said that on his road to the funeral he had met Monte-Cristo, who was directing his steps towards the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin to M. Danglars. The banker saw the carriage of the count enter the courtyard, and advanced to meet him with a sad though affable smile.

"Well!" said he, extending his hand to Monte-Cristo, "I suppose you have come to sympathize with me for, indeed, misfortune has taken possession of my house. When I perceived you, I was just asking myself whether I had not wished harm towards these poor Morcerfs which would have justified the proverb—'He who wishes misfortunes to happen to others experiences them himself.' Well! on my word of honor, I answered, 'No!' I wished no ill to Morcerf; he was a little proud, perhaps, for a

man who, like myself, had risen from nothing ; but we all have our faults. Do you know, count, that persons of our time of life — not that you belong to the class ; you are still a young man — but, as I was saying, persons of our time of life have been very unfortunate this year. For example, look at the puritanical procureur du roi, who has just lost his daughter — and in fact nearly all his family — in so singular a manner ; Morcerf dishonored and dead ; and then myself covered with ridicule, through the villainy of Benedetto ; besides —— ”

“ Besides what ? ” asked the count.

“ Alas ! do you not know ? ”

“ What new calamity ? ”

“ My daughter —— ”

“ Mademoiselle Danglars ? ”

“ Eugenie has left us ! ”

“ Good heavens ! what are you telling me ? ”

“ The truth, my dear count. Oh, how happy you must be in not having either wife or children ! ”

“ Do you think so ? ”

“ Indeed I do. ”

“ And so Mademoiselle Danglars —— ”

“ She could not endure the insult offered to us by that wretch, so she asked permission to travel. ”

“ And is she gone ? ”

“ The other night she left. ”

“ With Madame Danglars ? ”

“ No, with a relation. But still, we have quite lost our dear Eugenie ; for I doubt whether her pride will ever allow her to return to France. ”

“ Still, baron, ” said Monte-Cristo, “ family griefs, or indeed any other affliction which would crush a man whose child was his only treasure, are endurable to a millionaire. Philosophers may well say, and practical men will always support the opinion, that money mitigates many trials ; and if you admit the efficacy of this sovereign balm, you ought to be very easily consoled — you, the king of finance,

who form the intersecting point of all the powers in Europe, nay, the world!"

Danglars looked at him obliquely, as though to ascertain whether he spoke seriously.

"Yes," he answered, "if a fortune brings consolation, I ought to be consoled; I am rich."

"So rich, dear sir, that your fortune resembles the Pyramids; if you wished to demolish them, you could not; if it were possible, you would not dare!"

Danglars smiled at the good-natured pleasantry of the count.

"That reminds me," he said, "that when you entered, I was on the point of signing five little bonds; I have already signed two; will you allow me to do the same to the others?"

"Pray do so."

There was a moment's silence, during which the noise of the banker's pen was alone heard, while Monte-Cristo examined the gilt mouldings of the ceiling.

"Are they Spanish, Haytien, or Neapolitan bonds?" said Monte-Cristo.

"Neither," said Danglars, smiling; "they are bonds on the Bank of France, payable to the bearer. Stay," he added, "count,—you who may be called the emperor, if I claim the title of king of finance,—have you many pieces of paper of this size, each worth a million?"

The count took the papers which Danglars had so proudly presented to him into his hands, and read:

"To the Governor of the Bank.—Please pay to my order, from the fund deposited by me, the sum of a million.

"BARON DANGLARS."

"One, two, three, four, five," said Monte-Cristo; "five millions! why, what a Cræsus you are!"

"This is how I transact business!" said Danglars.

"It is really wonderful," said the count; "above all, if, as I suppose, it is payable at sight."

"It is indeed," said Danglars.

"It is a fine thing to have such credit; really, it is only in France these things are done. Five millions on five little scraps of paper!—it must be seen to be believed."

"You do not doubt it?"

"No!"

"You say so with an accent— Stay, you shall be convinced; take my clerk to the bank, and you will see him leave it with an order on the Treasury for the sum named."

"No!" said Monte-Cristo, folding the five notes, "most decidedly not; the thing is so curious, I will make the experiment myself. I am credited on you for six millions. I have drawn nine hundred thousand francs: you therefore still owe me five millions and a hundred thousand francs. I will take the five scraps of paper that I now hold as bonds, with your signature alone, and here is a receipt in full for the six millions between us. I had prepared it beforehand, for I am much in want of money to-day."

And Monte-Cristo placed the bonds in his pocket with one hand, while with the other he held out the receipt to Danglars.

If a thunderbolt had fallen at the banker's feet, he could not have experienced greater terror.

"What!" he stammered, "do you mean to take that money? Excuse me, excuse me, but I owe this money to the hospital—a deposit which I promised to pay this morning."

"Oh! well, then," said Monte-Cristo, "I am not particular about these five notes, pay me in a different form; I wished, from curiosity, to take these, that I might be able to say that, without any advice or preparation, the house of Danglars had paid me five millions without a minute's delay; it would have been so remarkable. But here are your bonds; pay me differently;" and he held

the bonds towards Danglars, who seized them like a vulture extending his claws to withhold the food attempted to be wrested from it. Suddenly he rallied, made a violent effort to restrain himself, and then a smile gradually widened the features of his disturbed countenance.

"Certainly," he said, "your receipt is money."

"Oh, dear, yes; and if you were at Rome, the house of Thomson and French would make no more difficulty about paying the money on my receipt than you have just done."

"Pardon me, count, pardon me!"

"Then I may keep this money?"

"Yes," said Danglars, while the perspiration started from the roots of his hair. "Yes, keep it—keep it."

Monte-Cristo replaced the notes in his pocket, with that indescribable expression which seemed to say, "Come, reflect: if you repent there is still time."

"No," said Danglars, "no, decidedly no; keep my signatures. But you know none are so formal as bankers in transacting business; I intended this money for the hospitals, and I seemed to be robbing them if I did not pay them with these precise bonds. How absurd! as if one crown were not as good as another. Excuse me," and he began to laugh loudly, but nervously.

"Certainly I excuse you," said Monte-Cristo, graciously, "and pocket them." And he placed the bonds in his pocketbook.

"But," said Danglars, "there is still a sum of one hundred thousand francs?"

"Oh! a mere nothing," said Monte-Cristo. "The balance would come to about that sum; but keep it, and we shall be quits."

"Count," said Danglars, "are you speaking seriously?"

"I never joke with bankers," said Monte-Cristo, in a freezing manner, which repelled impertinence; and he turned towards the door, just as the valet de chambre announced:

"M. de Boville, receiver-general of the hospitals."

"*Ma foi!*" said Monte-Cristo; "I think I arrived just in time to obtain your signatures, or they would have been disputed with me."

Danglars again became pale, and hastened to conduct the count out. Monte-Cristo exchanged a ceremonious bow with M. de Boville, who was standing in the waiting-room, and who was introduced into Danglars's room as soon as the count had left. The count's sad face was illumined by a faint smile, as he noticed the portfolio which the receiver-general held in his hand. At the door he found his carriage, and was immediately driven to the bank. Meanwhile, Danglars, repressing all emotion, advanced to meet the receiver-general. We need not say that a smile of condescension was stamped upon his lips.

"Good morning, creditor," said he; "for I wager anything it is the creditor who visits me."

"You are right, baron," answered M. de Boville; "the hospitals present themselves to you through me; the widows and orphans depute me to receive alms to the amount of five millions from you."

"And yet they say orphans are to be pitied," said Danglars, wishing to prolong the jest. "Poor things!"

"Here I am in their name," said M. de Boville, "but did you receive my letter yesterday?"

"Yes."

"I have brought my receipt."

"My dear M. Boville, your widows and orphans must oblige me by waiting twenty-four hours, since M. de Monte-Cristo, whom you just saw leaving here — you did see him, I think?"

"Yes; well?"

"Well, M. de Monte-Cristo has just carried off their five millions."

"How so?"

"The count had unlimited credit upon me — a credit



opened by Thomson and French, of Rome; he came to demand five millions at once, which I paid him with checks on the bank; my funds are deposited there; and you can understand that if I draw out ten millions on the same day, it will appear rather strange to the governor. Two days will be a different thing," said Danglars, smiling.

"Come," said Boville, with a tone of entire incredulity; "five millions to that gentleman who just left, and who bowed to me as though he knew me?"

"Perhaps he knows you, though you do not know him; M. de Monte-Cristo knows everybody."

"Five millions!"

"Here is his receipt. Believe your own eyes."

M. de Boville took the paper Danglars presented him, and read:

"Received of Baron Danglars the sum of five millions one hundred thousand francs, which will be repaid whenever he pleases by the house of Thomson and French, of Rome."

"It is really true," said De Boville.

"Do you know the house of Thomson and French?"

"Yes, I once had business to transact with it to the amount of 200,000 francs; but since then I have not heard it mentioned."

"It is one of the best houses in Europe," said Danglars, carelessly throwing down the receipt on his desk.

"And he had five millions in your hands alone! Why, this Count of Monte-Cristo must be a nabob."

"Indeed, I do not know what he is; he has three unlimited credits, one on me, one on Rothschild, one on Lafitte; and you see," he added, carelessly, "he has given me the preference, by leaving a balance of 100,000 francs."

M. de Boville manifested signs of extraordinary admiration.

"I must visit him and obtain some pious grant from him."

"Oh! you may make sure of him; his charities alone amount to 20,000 francs per month."

"It is magnificent! I will set before him the example of Madame de Morcerf and her son."

"What example?"

"They gave all their fortune to the hospitals."

"What fortune?"

"Their own — M. de Morcerf, who is deceased."

"For what reason?"

"Because they would not spend money so guiltily acquired."

"And what are they to live upon?"

"The mother retires into the country, and the son enters the army."

"Well, I must confess these are scruples."

"I registered their deed of gift yesterday."

"And how much did they possess?"

"Oh, not much! from twelve to thirteen hundred thousand francs. But to return to our millions."

"Certainly," said Danglars, in the most natural tone in the world. "Are you, then, pressed for this money?"

"Yes; for the examination of our cash takes place to-morrow."

"To-morrow! Why did you not tell me so before? Why, it is as good as a century! At what hour does the examination take place?"

"At two o'clock."

"Send at twelve," said Danglars, smiling.

M. de Boville said nothing, but nodded his head, and took up the portfolio.

"Now I think of it, you can do better," said Danglars.

"How do you mean?"

"The receipt of M. de Monte-Cristo is as good as money; take it to Rothschild's or Lafitte's, and they will take it of you directly."

"What, though payable at Rome?"

"Certainly; it will only cost you a discount of 5,000 or 6,000 francs." The receiver started back.

"*Ma foi!*" he said. "I prefer waiting till to-morrow. What a proposition!"

"I thought," said Danglars, with supreme impertinence, "that you perhaps had a deficiency to make up."

"Indeed!" said the receiver.

"And if that were the case, it would be worth while to make some sacrifice."

"Thank you; no, sir."

"Then it will be to-morrow?"

"Yes; but without fail."

"Ah! you are laughing at me; send to-morrow at twelve, and the bank shall be informed."

"I will come myself."

"Better still, since it will afford me the pleasure of seeing you." They shook hands.

"By the way," said M. de Boville, "are you not going to the funeral of poor Mademoiselle de Villefort, which I met on my road here?"

"No," said the banker; "I have appeared rather ridiculous since that affair of Benedetto, so I remain in the background."

"Bah! you are wrong. How were you to blame in that affair?"

"Listen! When one bears an irreproachable name, as I do, one is rather sensitive."

"Every one pities you, sir; and above all, Mademoiselle Danglars!"

"Poor Eugenie!" said Danglars; "do you know she is going to embrace a religious life?"

"No."

"Alas! it is unhappily but too true. The day after the event, she decided on leaving Paris with a nun of her acquaintance; they are going to seek a very strict convent in Italy or Spain."

"Oh, it is terrible!" and M. de Boville retired with this

exclamation, after expressing acute sympathy with the father. But he had scarcely left before Danglars, with an energy of action those can alone understand who have seen Robert Macaire represented by Frederic, exclaimed :

“Fool !”

Then enclosing Monte-Cristo's receipt in a little pocket-book, he added :

“Yes, come at twelve o'clock; I shall then be far away !”

Then he double-locked his door; emptied all his drawers, collected about fifty thousand francs in bank-notes, burned several papers, left others exposed to view, and then commenced writing a letter which he addressed :

“To Madame la Baronne Danglars.”

“I will place it on her table myself to-night,” he murmured.

Then taking a passport from his drawer, he said :

“Good ! it is available for two months longer.”

## CHAPTER CV.

## THE CEMETERY OF PÈRE LACHAISE.

M. DE BOVILLE had indeed met the funeral procession which conducted Valentine to her last home on earth. The weather was dull and stormy, a cold wind shook the few remaining yellow leaves from the boughs of the trees, and scattered them among the crowd which filled the Boulevards. M. de Villefort, a true Parisian, considered the cemetery of Père Lachaise alone worthy of receiving the mortal remains of a Parisian family; there alone the corpses belonging to him would be surrounded by worthy associates. He had therefore purchased a vault, which was quickly occupied by members of his family. On the front of the monument was inscribed: "The families of Saint-Meran and Villefort," for such had been the last wish expressed by poor Renee, Valentine's mother. The pompous procession therefore wended its way towards Père Lachaise from the Faubourg Saint Honore. Having crossed Paris, it passed through the Faubourg du Temple, then leaving the exterior Boulevard, it reached the cemetery. More than fifty private carriages followed the twenty mourning-coaches, and behind them more than five hundred persons joined the procession on foot.

These last consisted of all the young people, whom Valentine's death had struck like a thunderbolt, and who, notwithstanding the raw chilliness of the season, could not refrain from paying a last tribute to the memory of the beautiful, chaste, and adorable girl, thus cut off in the flower of her youth. As they left Paris, an equipage with four horses, at full speed, was seen to draw up suddenly;

it contained Monte-Cristo. The count left the carriage, and mingled in the crowd who followed on foot. Château-Renaud perceived him, and, immediately alighting from his coupé, joined him. The count looked attentively through every opening in the crowd; he was evidently watching for some one, but his search ended in disappointment.

"Where is Morrel?" he asked; "do either of these gentlemen know where he is?"

"We have already asked that question," said Château-Renaud, "for none of us have seen him."

The count was silent, but continued to gaze around him.

At length they arrived at the cemetery. The piercing eye of Monte-Cristo glanced through clusters of bushes and trees, and was soon relieved from all anxiety, for he saw a shadow glide between the yew-trees, and Monte-Cristo recognized him whom he sought. A funeral in this magnificent metropolis generally presents the same aspect at all times. Black figures are seen scattered in the long white avenues; a silence of earth and heaven is alone broken by the noise made by the crackling branches of hedges, planted around the monuments; then follows the melancholy chant of the priests, mingled now and then with a sob of anguish, escaping from some female concealed under a mass of flowers.

The shadow Monte-Cristo had remarked passed rapidly behind the tomb of Abelard and Heloise, and placed itself close to the horses' heads belonging to the hearse, and, following the undertaker's men, arrived with them at the spot appointed for the burial. Each person's attention was occupied. Monte-Cristo saw nothing but the shadow, which no one else observed. Twice the count left the ranks, to see whether the object of his interest had any concealed weapon beneath his clothes. When the procession stopped, this shadow was recognized as Morrel, who, with his coat buttoned up to his throat, his face livid, and convulsively crushing his hat between his fingers, leaned against a tree,

situated on an elevation commanding the mausoleum, so that none of the funeral details could escape his observation.

Everything was conducted in the usual manner. A few men, the least impressed of all by the scene, pronounced a discourse, — some deploring this premature death; others expatiating on the grief of the father; and one very ingenious person quoting the fact of Valentine having solicited pardon of her father for criminals on whom the arm of justice was ready to fall. At length they exhausted their stores of metaphor and mournful speeches.

Monte-Cristo heard and saw nothing, or rather he only saw Morrel, whose calmness had a frightful effect on those who knew what was passing in his heart.

"See!" said Beauchamp, pointing out Morrel to Debray. "What is he doing up there?" And they called Château-Renaud's attention to him.

"How pale he is!" said Château-Renaud, shuddering.

"He is cold!" said Debray.

"Not at all," said Château-Renaud, slowly; "I think he is violently agitated. He is very susceptible."

"Bah!" said Debray; "he scarcely knew Mademoiselle de Villefort; you said so yourself."

"True. Still I remember he danced three times with her at Madame de Morcerf's. Do you recollect that ball, count; where you produced such an effect?"

"No, I do not," replied Monte-Cristo, without even knowing of what or to whom he was speaking, so much was he occupied in watching Morrel, who was holding his breath with emotion. "The discourse is over; farewell, gentlemen," said the count.

And he disappeared without any one seeing whither he went. The funeral being over, the guests returned to Paris. Château-Renaud looked for a moment for Morrel; but while watching the departure of the count, Morrel had quitted his post, and Château-Renaud, failing in his search, joined Debray and Beauchamp.

Monte-Cristo concealed himself behind a large tomb, and

waited the arrival of Morrel, who, by degrees, approached the tomb now abandoned by spectators and workmen. Morrel threw a glance around, but before it reached the spot occupied by Monte-Cristo, the latter had advanced yet nearer, still unperceived.

The young man knelt down. The count, with outstretched neck and glaring eyes, stood in an attitude ready to pounce upon Morrel upon the first occasion. Morrel bent his head till it touched the stone; then clutching the grating with both hands, he murmured :

“Oh ! Valentine !”

The count's heart was pierced by the utterance of these two words; he stepped forward, and touching the young man's shoulder, said :

“I was looking for you, my friend.”

Monte-Cristo expected a burst of passion, but he was deceived, for Morrel, turning around, said with calmness :

“You see I was praying.”

The scrutinizing glance of the count searched the young man from head to foot. He then seemed more easy.

“Shall I drive you back to Paris ?” he asked.

“No, thank you.”

“Do you wish anything ?”

“Leave me to pray.”

The count withdrew without opposition, but it was only to place himself in a situation where he could watch every movement of Morrel, who at length rose, brushed the dust from his knees, and turned towards Paris, without once looking back. He walked slowly down the Rue de la Rougette. The count, dismissing his carriage, followed him about a hundred paces behind. Maximilian crossed the canal and entered the Rue Meslay by the Boulevards.

Five minutes after the door had been closed on Morrel's entrance, it was again opened for the count. Julie was at the entrance of the garden, where she was attentively watching Penelon, who, entering with zeal into his profession of a gardener, was very busy grafting some Bengal roses.



"Ah! count!" she exclaimed, with the delight manifested by every member of the family whenever he visited the Rue Meslay.

"Maximilian has just returned, has he not, madame?" asked the count.

"Yes, I think I saw him pass; but pray call Emmanuel."

"Excuse me, madame, but I must go up to Maximilian's room this instant," replied Monte-Cristo. "I have something of the greatest importance to tell him."

"Go, then," she said, with a charming smile, which accompanied him until he had disappeared.

Monte-Cristo soon ran up the staircase conducting from the ground floor to Maximilian's room; when he reached the landing he listened attentively, but all was still. Like many old houses occupied by a single family, the room door was panelled with glass; but it was locked, Maximilian was shut in, and it was impossible to see what was passing in the room, owing to a red curtain being drawn before the glass. The count's anxiety was manifested by a bright color, which seldom appeared on the face of that impassible man.

"What shall I do?" he uttered, and reflected for a moment. "Shall I ring? No, the sound of a bell, announcing a visitor, will but accelerate the resolution of one in Maximilian's situation, and then the bell would be followed by a louder noise."

Monte-Cristo trembled from head to foot, and as if his determination had been taken with the rapidity of lightning, he struck one of the panes of glass with his elbow; the glass was shattered to atoms; then withdrawing the curtain, he saw Morrel, who had been writing at his desk, bound from his seat at the noise of the broken window.

"I beg a thousand pardons!" said the count; "there is nothing the matter, but I slipped down and broke one of your panes of glass with my elbow. Since it is open, I will take advantage of it to enter your room; do not disturb yourself—do not disturb yourself!"

And passing his hand through the broken glass, the count opened the door.

Morrel, evidently discomposed, came to meet Monte-Cristo, less with the intention of receiving him than to exclude his entry.

"*Ma foi!*" said Monte-Cristo, rubbing his elbow, "it's all your servant's fault; your stairs are so polished it is like walking on glass."

"Are you hurt, sir?" coldly asked Morrel.

"I believe not. But what are you about there? you were writing."

"I?"

"Your fingers are stained with ink."

"Ah! true, I was writing. I do sometimes, soldier though I am."

Monte-Cristo advanced into the room; Maximilian was obliged to let him pass, but he followed him.

"You were writing?" said Monte-Cristo, with a searching look.

"I have already had the honor of telling you I was," said Morrel.

The count looked around him.

"Your pistols are beside your desk," said Monte-Cristo, pointing with his finger to the pistols on the table.

"I am on the point of starting on a journey," replied Morrel, disdainfully.

"My friend!" exclaimed Monte-Cristo in a tone of exquisite sweetness.

"Sir?"

"My friend, my dear Maximilian, do not make a hasty resolution, I entreat you."

"I make a hasty resolution?" said Morrel, shrugging his shoulders; "is there anything extraordinary in a journey?"

"Maximilian," said the count, "let us both lay aside the mask we have assumed. You no more deceive me with that false calmness than I impose upon you with

my frivolous solicitude. You can understand, can you not, that to have acted as I have done, to have broken those windows, to have intruded on the solitude of a friend—you can understand that to have done all this I must have been actuated by real uneasiness, or rather by a terrible conviction. Morrel, you are going to destroy yourself!”

“Indeed, count,” said Morrel, shuddering, “what has put this into your head?”

“I tell you that you are about to destroy yourself,” continued the count, “and here is the proof of what I say;” and, approaching the desk, he removed the sheet of paper which Morrel had placed over the letter he had begun, and took the latter in his hands.

Morrel rushed forward to tear it from him; but Monte-Cristo, perceiving his intention, seized his wrist with his iron grasp.

“You wish to destroy yourself,” said the count; “you have written it.”

“Well!” said Morrel, changing his expression of calmness for one of violence; “well! and if I do intend to turn this pistol against myself, who shall prevent me? who will dare prevent me? All my hopes are blighted, my heart is broken, my life a burden, everything around me is sad and mournful; earth has become distasteful to me, and human voices distract me. It is mercy to let me die, or if I live, I shall lose my reason and become mad. When, sir, I tell you all this with tears of heartfelt anguish, can you reply that I am wrong? Can you prevent my putting an end to my miserable existence? Tell me, sir, could you have the courage to do so?”

“Yes, Morrel,” said Monte-Cristo, with a calmness which contrasted strangely with the young man’s excitement; “yes; I would do so.”

“You!” exclaimed Morrel, with increasing anger and reproach; “you, who have deceived me with false hopes, who have cheered and soothed me with vain promises,

when I might, if not have saved her, at least have seen her die in my arms! you who pretend to understand everything, even the hidden sources of knowledge! you, who enact the part of a guardian angel upon the earth, and could not even find an antidote to a poison administered to a young girl. Ah! sir, indeed you would inspire me with pity, were you not hateful in my eyes."

"Morrel! ——"

"Yes; you tell me to lay aside the mask, and I will do so! Be satisfied! When you spoke to me at the cemetery, I answered you; my heart was softened; when you arrived here, I allowed you to enter. But since you abuse my confidence, since you have devised a new torture, after I thought I had exhausted them all, then, Count of Monte-Cristo, my pretended benefactor — then, Count of Monte-Cristo, the universal guardian, be satisfied, you shall witness the death of your friend;" and Morrel, with a maniacal laugh, again rushed towards the pistols.

"And I again repeat, you shall not commit suicide."

"Prevent me, then," replied Morrel, with another struggle, which, like the first, failed in releasing him from the count's grasp.

"I will prevent you."

"And who are you, then, who arrogate to yourself this tyrannical right over free and rational beings?"

"Who am I?" repeated Monte-Cristo. "Listen; I am the only man in the world having the right to say to you, 'Morrel, your father's son shall not die to-day;'" and Monte-Cristo, with an expression of majesty and sublimity, advanced with his arms folded towards the young man, who, involuntarily overcome by the command of this man, recoiled a step.

"Why do you mention my father?" stammered he; "why do you mingle a recollection of him with the affairs of to-day?"

"Because I am he who saved your father's life when he wished to destroy himself, as you do to-day — because I am

the man who sent the purse to your younger sister and the 'Pharaoh' to old Morrel — because I am the Edmond Dantes who nursed you, a child, on my knees."

Morrel made another step back, staggering, breathless, crushed; then all his strength gave way, and he fell prostrate at the feet of Monte-Cristo. Then his admirable nature underwent a complete and sudden revulsion; he rose, bounded out of the room, and rushed to the stairs, exclaiming energetically:

"Julie! Julie! Emmanuel! Emmanuel!"

Monte-Cristo endeavored also to leave, but Maximilian would have died rather than relax his hold of the handle of the door, which he closed upon the count. Julie, Emmanuel, and some of the servants ran up in alarm on hearing the cries of Maximilian. Morrel seized their hands, and, opening the door, exclaimed in a voice choked with sobs:

"On your knees! on your knees! He is our benefactor! the savior of our father! He is ——"

He would have added "Edmond Dantes," but the count seized his arm and prevented him. Julie threw herself into the arms of the count; Emmanuel embraced him as a guardian angel; Morrel fell again on his knees, and struck the ground with his forehead. Then the iron-hearted man felt his heart swell in his breast; a flame seemed to rush from his throat to his eyes; he bent his head and wept. For awhile, nothing was heard in the room but a succession of sobs, while the incense from their grateful hearts mounted to heaven. Julie had scarcely recovered from her deep emotion when she rushed out of the room, descended to the next floor, ran into the drawing-room with child-like joy, and raised the crystal globe which covered the purse given by the unknown of the Allées de Meillan. Meanwhile, Emmanuel, in a broken voice, said to the count:

"Oh, count, how could you, hearing us so often speak of our unknown benefactor, seeing us pay such homage of

gratitude and adoration to his memory, how could you continue so long without discovering yourself to us? Oh, it was cruel to us, and—dare I say it?—to you also.”

“Listen, my friend,” said the count — “I may call you so, since we have really been friends for the last eleven years; the discovery of this secret has been occasioned by a great event which you must never know. I wished to bury it during my whole life in my own bosom, but your brother Maximilian wrested it from me by a violence he repents of now, I am sure.” Then turning around, and seeing that Morrel, still on his knees, had thrown himself into an armchair, he added in a low voice, pressing Emmanuel’s hand significantly:

“Watch over him.”

“Why so?” asked the young man, surprised.

“I cannot explain myself; but watch over him.”

Emmanuel looked around the room and caught sight of the pistols. His eyes rested on the arms, and he pointed to them. Monte-Cristo bent his head. Emmanuel went towards the pistols.

“Leave them,” said Monte-Cristo. Then, walking towards Morrel, he took his hand; the tumultuous agitation of the young man was succeeded by a profound stupor. Julie returned, holding in her hands the silken purse, while tears of joy rolled down her cheeks, like dewdrops on the rose.

“Here is the relic,” she said; “do not think it will be less dear to us now that we are acquainted with our benefactor!”

“My child,” said Monte-Cristo, coloring, “allow me to take back that purse. Since you now know my face, I wish to be remembered alone through the affection I hope you will grant me.”

“Oh!” said Julie, pressing the purse to her heart; “no, no, I beseech you, do not take it; for some unhappy day you will leave us, will you not?”

"You have guessed rightly, madame," replied Monte-Cristo, smiling; "in a week I shall have left this country, where so many persons who merited the vengeance of Heaven lived happily, while my father perished of hunger and grief."

While announcing his departure, the count fixed his eyes on Morrel, and remarked that the words, "I shall have left this country," had failed to rouse him from his lethargy. He then saw that he must make another struggle against the grief of his friend, and taking the hands of Emmanuel and Julie, which he pressed within his own, he said, with the mild authority of a father:

"My kind friends, leave me alone with Maximilian."

Julie saw the means offered of carrying off her precious relic, which Monte-Cristo had forgotten. She drew her husband to the door.

"Let us leave them," she said.

The count was alone with Morrel, who remained motionless as a statue.

"Come," said Monte-Cristo, touching his shoulder with his finger, "are you a man again, Maximilian?"

"Yes, for I begin to suffer again."

The count frowned, apparently in gloomy hesitation.

"Maximilian," he said, "the ideas which you yield to are unworthy of a Christian."

"Oh, do not fear, my friend," said Morrel, raising his head, and smiling with a sweet expression on the count. "I shall no longer attempt my life."

"Then we are to have no more pistols — no more arms?"

"No; I have found a better remedy for my grief than either a bullet or knife."

"Poor fellow! — what is it?"

"My grief will kill me of itself."

"My friend," said Monte-Cristo, with an expression of melancholy equal to his own, "listen to me. One day, in a moment of despair like yours, since it led to a similar

resolution, I, like you, wished to kill myself; one day your father, equally desperate, wished to kill himself, too. If any one had said to your father, at the moment he raised the pistol to his head — if any one had told me, when in my prison I pushed back the food I had not tasted for three days — if any one had said to either of us then, ‘Live! the day will come when you will be happy and will bless life,’ no matter whose voice had spoken, we should have heard him with the smile of doubt, or the anguish of incredulity; and yet how many times has your father blessed life while embracing you, how often have I myself ——”

“Ah!” exclaimed Morrel, interrupting the count, “you had only lost your liberty, my father had only lost his fortune, but I have lost Valentine.”

“Look at me,” said Monte-Cristo, with that expression which sometimes made him so eloquent and persuasive — “look at me; there are no tears in my eyes, nor is there fever in my veins; yet I see you suffer — you, Maximilian, whom I love as my own son. Well, does not this tell you that in grief, as in life, there is always something to look forward to beyond? Now, if I entreat, if I order you to live, Morrel, it is in the conviction that one day you will thank me for having preserved your life.”

“Oh, heavens!” said the young man, “what are you saying, count? Take care. But perhaps you have never loved!”

“Child!” replied the count.

“I mean, as I love. You see I have been a soldier ever since I attained manhood; I reached the age of twenty-nine without loving, for none of the feelings I before then experienced merit the appellation of love; well, at twenty-nine I saw Valentine; during two years I have loved her, during two years I have seen written in her heart, as in a book, all the virtues of a daughter and wife. Count, to possess Valentine would have been a happiness too infinite, too ecstatic, too complete, too divine for this world, since



it has been denied me; but without Valentine the earth is desolate."

"I have told you to hope," said the count.

"Then have a care, I repeat, for you seek to persuade me, and if you succeed, I should lose my reason, for I should hope that I could again behold Valentine."

The count smiled.

"My friend, my father," said Morrel, with excitement, "have a care, I again repeat, for the power you wield over me alarms me. Weigh your words before you speak, for my eyes have already become brighter, and my heart rebounds; be cautious, or you will make me believe in supernatural agencies. I must obey you; so in mercy be cautious."

"Hope, my friend," repeated the count.

"Ah!" said Morrel, falling from the height of excitement to the abyss of despair; "ah! you are playing with me, like those good or rather selfish mothers who soothe their children with honeyed words because their screams annoy them. No, my friend, I was wrong to caution you. Do not fear; I will bury my grief so deep in my heart, I will disguise it so that you shall not even care to sympathize with me. Adieu, my friend, adieu!"

"On the contrary," said the count, "from this time you must live with me—you must not leave me; and in a week we shall have left France behind us."

"And you still bid me hope?"

"I tell you to hope because I have a method of curing you."

"Count, you render me sadder than before, if it be possible. You think the result of this blow has been to produce an ordinary grief, and you would cure it by an ordinary remedy—change of scene." And Morrel dropped his head with disdainful incredulity.

"What can I say more?" asked Monte-Cristo; "I have confidence in the remedy I propose, and only ask you to permit me to assure you of its efficacy."

"Count, you prolong my agony."

"Then," said the count, "your feeble spirit will not even grant me the trial I request? Come! do you know of what the Count of Monte-Cristo is capable? do you know that he holds terrestrial beings under his control? nay, that he can almost work a miracle? Well! wait for the miracle I hope to accomplish, or ——"

"Or?" repeated Morrel.

"Or, take care, Morrel, lest I call you ungrateful."

"Have pity on me, count!"

"I feel so much pity towards you, Maximilian, that — listen to me attentively — if I do not cure you in a month, to the day, to the very hour — mark my words, Morrel — I will place loaded pistols before you, and a cup of the deadliest Italian poison — a poison more sure and prompt than that which has killed Valentine."

"Will you promise me?"

"Yes; for I am a man, and have suffered like yourself and also contemplated suicide; indeed, often since misfortune has left me, I have longed for the delights of an eternal sleep."

"Are you sure you will promise me this?" said Morrel, intoxicated.

"I not only promise, but swear it," said Monte-Cristo, extending his hand.

"In a month, then, on your honor, if I am not consoled, you will let me take my life into my own hands, and whatever may happen, you will not call me ungrateful?"

"In a month, to the day; the very hour and the date is a sacred one, Maximilian. I do not know whether you remember that this is the 5th of September; it is ten years to-day since I saved your father's life, who wished to die."

Morrel seized the count's hand and kissed it; the count allowed him to pay the homage he felt due to him.

"In a month you will find on the table at which we shall be then sitting good pistols and a delicious draught;

but, on the other hand, you must promise me not to attempt your life before that time."

"Oh! I also swear it."

Monte-Cristo drew the young man towards him, and pressed him for some time to his heart.

"And now," he said, "after to-day you will come and live with me; you can occupy Haydee's apartment, and my daughter will at least be replaced by my son."

"Haydee," said Morrel, "what has become of her?"

"She departed last night."

"To leave you?"

"To wait for me. Hold yourself ready, then, to join me at the Champs Elysées, and lead me out of this house without any one seeing my departure."

Maximilian hung his head, and obeyed with child-like reverence.

## CHAPTER CVI.

## THE DIVISION.

THE first floor of the house in the Rue Saint Germain des Prés, chosen by Albert and Madame de Morcerf for their residence, consisting of one room, was let to a very mysterious person. This was a man whose face the concierge himself had never seen; for in the winter his chin was buried in one of those large red handkerchiefs worn by gentlemen's coachmen on cold nights, and in the summer he made a point of always blowing his nose just as he approached the door. Contrary to custom, this gentleman had not been watched, for as the report ran that he was a person of high rank, and one who would allow no impertinent interference, his incognito was strictly respected. His visits were tolerably regular, though occasionally he appeared a little before or after his time, but generally, both in summer and winter, he took possession of his apartment about four o'clock, though he never spent the night there. At half-past three in the winter the fire was lit by the discreet servant who had the superintendence of the little apartment; and in the summer ices were placed on the table at the same hour. At four o'clock, as we have already stated, the mysterious personage arrived. Twenty minutes afterwards a carriage stopped at the house, a lady alighted in a black or dark blue dress, and always thickly veiled; she passed like a shadow through the lodge, and ran upstairs without a sound escaping under the touch of her light foot. No one ever asked her where she was

going. Her face, therefore, like that of the gentleman, was perfectly unknown to the two concierges, who were, perhaps, unequalled throughout the capital for discretion. We need not say that she stopped at the first floor. Then she tapped at a door in a peculiar manner, which, after being opened to admit her, was again fastened, and all was done. The same precautions were used in leaving as on entering the house. The lady always left first; and, stepping into her carriage, it drove away, sometimes towards the right hand, sometimes the left; then, about twenty minutes afterwards, the gentleman would also leave, buried in his cravat or concealed by his handkerchief.

The day after Monte-Cristo had called upon Danglars, the mysterious lodger entered at ten o'clock in the morning instead of four in the afternoon. Almost directly afterwards, without the usual interval of time, a hackney-coach arrived, and the veiled lady ran hastily upstairs. The door opened, but before it could be closed, the lady exclaimed :

“ Oh, Lucien ! oh, my friend ! ”

The concierge, therefore, heard for the first time that the lodger's name was Lucien ; still, as he was the very perfection of a doorkeeper, he made up his mind not to tell his wife.

“ Well, what is the matter, my dear ? ” asked the gentleman whose name the lady's agitation revealed ; “ tell me what is the matter.”

“ Oh, Lucien, can I confide in you ? ”

“ Of course, you know you can do so. But what can be the matter ? Your note of this morning has completely bewildered me. This precipitation — this disordered meeting. Come, ease my anxiety, or else frighten me at once.”

“ Lucien ! a great event has happened ! ” said the lady, glancing inquiringly at Lucien — “ M. Danglars left last night ! ”

"Left! M. Danglars left! Where is he gone to?"

"I do not know."

"What do you mean? Is he gone intending not to return?"

"Undoubtedly; at ten o'clock at night his horses took him to the barrier of Charenton; there a post-chaise was waiting for him — he entered it with his valet de chambre, saying that he was going to Fontainebleau."

"Then what did you mean ——"

"Stay! — he left a letter for me."

"A letter?"

"Yes; read it."

And the baroness took from her pocket a letter, which she gave to Debray.

Debray paused a moment before reading, as if trying to guess its contents, or, perhaps, while making up his mind how to act, whatever it might contain. No doubt his ideas were arranged in a few minutes, for he began reading the letter which caused so much uneasiness in the heart of the baroness, and which ran as follows:

"Madame and most faithful wife."

Debray mechanically stopped and looked at the baroness, whose face became covered with blushes.

"Read," she said.

Debray continued:

"When you receive this, you will no longer have a husband. Oh! you need not be alarmed; you will only have lost him as you have lost your daughter; I mean that I shall be travelling on one of the thirty or forty roads leading out of France. I owe you some explanations for my conduct, and as you are a woman that can perfectly understand me, I will give them. Listen, then. I this morning received five millions, which I paid away; almost directly afterwards another demand for the same sum was

presented to me; I postponed this creditor till to-morrow, and I intend leaving to-day to escape that to-morrow, which would be rather too unpleasant for me to endure. You understand this, do you not, my most precious wife? I say you understand this, because you are as conversant with my affairs as I am, indeed I think you understand them better, since I am ignorant of what has become of a considerable portion of my fortune, once very tolerable, while I am sure, madame, that you are perfectly acquainted with it. For women have infallible instincts; they can even explain the marvellous by an algebraic calculation they have invented; but I, who only understand my own figures, know nothing more than that one day these figures deceived me. Have you admired the rapidity of my fall? Have you been slightly dazzled at the sudden fusion of my ingots? I confess I have seen nothing but the fire; let us hope you have found some gold amongst the ashes. With this consoling idea, I leave you, madame and most prudent wife, without any conscientious reproach for abandoning you; you have friends left, and the ashes I have already mentioned, and, above all, the liberty I hasten to restore to you. And here, madame, I must add another word of explanation. So long as I hoped you were working for the good of our house and for the fortune of our daughter, I philosophically closed my eyes; but as you have transformed that house into a vast ruin, I will not be the foundation of another man's fortune. You were rich when I married you, but little respected. Excuse me for speaking so very candidly, but as this is intended only for yourself, I do not see why I should weigh my words. I have augmented our fortune, and it has continued to increase during the last fifteen years, till extraordinary and unexpected catastrophes have suddenly overturned it, without any fault of mine, I can honestly declare. You, madame, have only sought to increase your own, and I am convinced you have succeeded. I leave you, therefore, as I took you — rich, but

little respected. Adieu! I also intend from this time to work on my own account. Accept my acknowledgments for the example you have set me, and which I intend following.

“Your very devoted husband,

“BARON DANGLARS.”

The baroness had watched Debray while reading this long and painful letter, and saw him, notwithstanding his self-control, change color once or twice. When he had ended the perusal, he folded the letter, and resumed his pensive attitude.

“Well?” asked Madame Danglars, with an anxiety easy to be understood.

“Well, madame?” unhesitatingly repeated Debray.

“With what ideas does that letter inspire you?”

“Oh! it is simple enough, madame; it inspires me with the idea that M. Danglars has left suspiciously.”

“Certainly; but is this all you have to say to me?”

“I do not understand you,” said Debray, with freezing coldness.

“He is gone! Gone, never to return!”

“Oh, madame! do not think that!”

“I tell you he will never return. I know his character; he is inflexible in any resolutions formed for his own interests. If he could have made any use of me, he would have taken me with him; he leaves me in Paris, as our separation will conduce to his benefit; therefore he has gone, and I am free forever,” added Madame Danglars, in the same supplicating tone.

Debray, instead of answering, allowed her to remain in an attitude of nervous inquiry.

“Well!” she said at length, “do you not answer me?”

“I have but one question to ask you — what do you intend to do?”

“I was going to ask you,” replied the baroness, with a beating heart.



"Ah! then you wish to ask advice of me!"

"Yes; I do wish to ask your advice," said Madame Danglars, with anxious expectation.

"Then, if you wish to take my advice," said the young man, coldly, "I would recommend you to travel."

"To travel!" she murmured.

"Certainly; as M. Danglars says, you are rich and perfectly free. In my opinion, a withdrawal from Paris is absolutely necessary after the double catastrophe of Mademoiselle Danglars's broken contract and M. Danglars's disappearance. The world will think you abandoned and poor, for the wife of a bankrupt would never be forgiven were she to keep up the appearance of opulence. You have only to remain in Paris for about a fortnight, telling the world you are abandoned, and relating the details of this desertion to your best friends, who will soon spread the report. Then you can quit your house, leaving your jewels and giving up your jointure, and every one's mouth will be filled with praises of your disinterestedness. They will know you are deserted, and think you also poor; for I alone know your real financial position, and am quite ready to give up my accounts as an honest partner."

The dread with which the baroness, pale and motionless, listened to this was equalled by the calm indifference with which Debray had spoken.

"Deserted!" she repeated; "ah, yes, I am indeed deserted! You are right, sir, and no one can doubt my position."

These were the only words uttered by the proud and violent woman.

"But then you are rich — very rich, indeed," continued Debray, taking out some papers from his pocketbook, which he spread upon the table.

Madame Danglars saw them not; she was fully engaged in stilling the beatings of her heart, and restraining the tears which were ready to gush forth. At length a sense of dignity prevailed, and if she did not entirely master her

agitation, she at least succeeded in preventing the fall of a single tear.

"Madame," said Debray, "it is nearly six months since we have been associated. You furnished a principal of 100,000 francs. Our partnership began in the month of April. In May we commenced operations, and in the course of the month gained 450,000 francs. In June the profit amounted to 900,000. In July we added 1,700,000 francs; it was, you know, the month of the Spanish bonds. In August we lost 300,000 francs at the beginning of the month, but on the 13th we made up for it, and we now find that our accounts, reckoning from the first day of partnership up to yesterday, when I closed them, showed a capital of 2,400,000 francs, that is, 1,200,000 for each of us. Now, madame," said Debray, delivering up his accounts in the methodical manner of a stock-broker, "there are still 80,000 francs, the interest of this money, in my hands."

"But," said the baroness, "I thought you never put the money out to interest?"

"Excuse me, madame," said Debray, coldly, "I had your permission to do so, and I have made use of it. There are, then, 40,000 francs for your share, besides the 100,000 you furnished me to begin with, making, in all, 1,340,000 francs for your portion. Now, madame, I took the precaution of drawing out your money the day before yesterday; it is not long ago, you see, and I might be suspected of continually expecting to be called on to deliver up my accounts. There is your money, half in bank-notes, and the other half in checks payable to the bearer. I say *there*, for as I did not consider my house safe enough, nor lawyers sufficiently discreet, and as landed property carries evidence with it, and, moreover, since you have no right to possess anything independent of your husband, I have kept this sum, now your whole fortune, in a chest concealed under that closet, and, for greater security, I myself fastened it in. Now, madame," continued Debray, first opening the

closet, and then the chest, "now, madame, here are eight hundred notes of 1,000 francs each, resembling, as you see, a large book bound in iron; to this I add a dividend of 25,000 francs; then, for the odd cash, making, I think, about 110,000 francs, here is a check upon my banker, who, not being M. Danglars, will pay you the amount, you may rest assured."

Madame Danglars mechanically took the check, the dividend, and the heap of bank-notes. This enormous fortune made no great appearance on the table. Madame Danglars with tearless eyes, but with her breast heaving with concealed emotion, placed the bank-notes in her bag, put the dividend and check into her pocketbook, and then, standing pale and mute, awaited one kind word of consolation. But she waited in vain.

"Now, madame," said Debray, "you have a splendid fortune, an income of about 60,000 livres a year, which is enormous for a woman who cannot keep an establishment here for a year at least. You will be able to indulge all your fancies; besides, should you find your income insufficient, you can, for the sake of the past, madame, make use of mine; and I am ready to offer you all I possess on loan."

"Thank you, sir—thank you," replied the baroness; "you forget that what you have just paid me is much more than a poor woman requires, who intends, for some time at least, to retire from the world."

Debray was for a moment surprised, but immediately recovering himself, he bowed with an air which seemed to convey:

"As you please, madame."

Madame Danglars had until then perhaps hoped for something; but when she saw the careless bow of Debray, and the glance by which it was accompanied, together with his significant silence, she raised her head, and, without the slightest passion, or violence, or even hesitation, ran downstairs, disdaining to address a last farewell to one who could thus part from her.

"Bah!" said Debray, when she had left, "these are fine projects! She will remain at home, read novels, and speculate at cards, since she can no longer do so on the Bourse."

Then taking up his account-book, he cancelled with the greatest care all the amounts he had just paid away.

"I have 1,060,000 francs remaining," he said. "What a pity Mademoiselle de Villefort is dead! She suited me in every respect, and I would have married her."

And he calmly waited till the twenty minutes had elapsed after Madame Danglars's departure before he left the house. During this time he occupied himself in making figures, with his watch by his side.

Asmodeus — that diabolical personage — who would have been created by every fertile imagination, if Le Sage had not acquired the priority in his *chef d'œuvre* — would have enjoyed a singular spectacle if he had lifted up the roof of the little house in the Rue Saint Germain des Prés, while Debray was casting up his figures.

Above the room in which Debray had been dividing two millions and a half with Madame Danglars was another, inhabited by persons who have played too prominent a part in the incidents we have related for their appearance not to create some interest.

Mercedes and Albert were in that room. Mercedes was much changed within the last few days; not that, even in her days of fortune, she had ever dressed with that magnificent display which makes us no longer able to recognize a woman when she appears in a plain and simple attire; nor, indeed, had she fallen into that state of depression where it is impossible to conceal the garb of misery; no — the change in Mercedes was, that her eye no longer sparkled, her lips no longer smiled, and there was now a hesitation in uttering the words which formerly fell so fluently from her ready wit. It was not poverty which had broken her spirit; it was not a want of courage which rendered her poverty burdensome. Mercedes de-

scended from the exalted position she had occupied, lost in the sphere she had now chosen, like a person passing from a room splendidly lighted into utter darkness; Mercedes appeared like a queen fallen from her palace to a hovel, and who, reduced to strict necessity, could neither become reconciled to the earthen vessels she was herself forced to place upon the table, nor to the humble pallet which succeeded her bed.

The beautiful Catalan and noble countess had lost both her proud glance and charming smile because she saw nothing but misery around her; the walls were hung with one of those gray papers which economical landlords choose as not likely to show the dirt; the floor was uncarpeted; the furniture attracted the attention by the poor attempt at luxury; indeed, everything offended the eyes accustomed to refinement and elegance.

Madame Morcerf had lived there since leaving her hotel; the continual silence of the spot oppressed her; still, seeing that Albert continually watched her countenance, to judge the state of her feelings, she constrained herself to assume the monotonous smile of the lips alone, which, contrasted with the sweet and beaming expression that usually shone from her eyes, seemed like "moonlight on a statue" — yielding light without warmth.

Albert, too, was ill at ease; the remains of luxury prevented his sinking into his actual position. If he wished to go out without gloves, his hands appeared too white; if he wished to walk through the town, his boots seemed too highly polished. Yet these two noble and intelligent creatures, united by the indissoluble ties of maternal and filial love, had succeeded in tacitly understanding one another, and economizing their stores; and Albert had been able to tell his mother without extorting a change of countenance:

"Mother, we have no more money."

Mercedes had never known misery; she had often, in her youth, spoken of poverty, but between want and

necessity, though synonymous words, there is a wide difference. Among the Catalans, Mercedes wished for a thousand things, but still she never really wanted any. So long as the nets were good, they caught fish; and so long as they sold their fish, they were able to buy thread for new nets. And then, shut out from friendship, having but one affection, which could not be mixed up with her ordinary pursuits, she thought of herself — of no one but herself. Upon the little she earned she lived as well as she could; now there were two to be supported, and nothing to live upon.

Winter approached; Mercedes had no fire in that cold and naked room — she who was accustomed to stoves which heated the house from the hall to the boudoir; she had not even one little flower — she, whose apartment had been a conservatory of costly exotics. But she had her son.

Hitherto the excitement of fulfilling a duty had sustained them. Excitement, like enthusiasm, sometimes renders us unconscious to the things of earth. But the excitement had calmed down, and they felt themselves obliged to descend from dreams to reality; after having exhausted the idea, they found they must talk of the actual.

"Mother," said Albert, as Madame Danglars came downstairs, "let us reckon our riches, if you please; I want a capital to build my plans upon."

"Capital — nothing!" replied Mercedes, with a mournful smile.

"No, mother — capital 3,000 francs. And I have an idea of our leading a delightful life upon this 3,000 francs."

"Child!" sighed Mercedes.

"Alas! dear mother," said the young man, "I have unhappily spent too much of your money not to know the value of it. These 3,000 francs are enormous, and I intend building upon this foundation a miraculous certainty for the future."

"You say this, my dear boy; but do you think we ought to accept these — 3,000 francs?" said Mercedes coloring.

"I think so," answered Albert, in a firm tone. "We will accept them the more readily since we have them not here; you know they are buried in the garden of the little house in the Allées de Meillan, at Marseilles. With 200 francs we can reach Marseilles."

"With 200 francs? — think well, Albert."

"Oh, as for that, I have inquired respecting the diligences and steamboats, and my calculations are made. You will take the coupé to Chalons. You see, mother, I treat you handsomely for thirty-five francs."

Albert then took a pen and wrote:

	Frs.
Coupé, thirty-five francs . . . . .	35
From Chalons to Lyons you will go by steamboat — six francs . . . . .	6
From Lyons to Avignon (still by steamboat), sixteen francs . . . . .	16
From Avignon to Marseilles, seven francs . . . . .	7
Expenses on the road about, fifty francs . . . . .	50
	<hr/>
Total . . . . .	114

"Let us put down 120," added Albert, smiling. "You see I am generous; am I not, mother?"

"But you, my poor child?"

"I? do you not see I reserve eighty francs for myself? A young man does not require luxuries; besides, I know what travelling is."

"With a post-chaise and valet de chambre?"

"Any way, mother."

"Well, be it so. But these 200 francs?"

"Here they are, and 200 more besides. See, I have sold my watch for 100 francs, and the guard and seals for 300. How fortunate the ornaments were worth more than the

watch! Still the same story of superfluities! Now I think we are rich, since, instead of the 114 francs we require for our journey, we find ourselves in possession of 250."

"But we owe something in this house."

"Thirty francs; but I pay that out of my 150 francs, that is understood; and as I require only eighty francs for my journey, you see I am overwhelmed with luxury. But that is not all. What do you say to this, mother?"

And Albert took out a little pocketbook with golden clasps, a remnant of his old fancies, or perhaps a tender souvenir from one of those mysterious and veiled ladies who used to knock at his little door—Albert took out of this pocketbook a note of 1,000 francs.

"What is this?" asked Mercedes.

"A thousand francs."

"But whence have you obtained them?"

"Listen to me, mother, and do not yield too much to agitation."

And Albert, rising, kissed his mother on both cheeks, and then stood looking at her.

"You cannot imagine, mother, how beautiful I think you!" said the young man, impressed with a profound feeling of filial love. "You are, indeed, the most beautiful and most noble woman I ever saw!"

"Dear child!" said Mercedes, endeavoring in vain to restrain a tear which glistened in her eye. "Indeed, you only wanted misfortune to change my love for you to admiration. I am not unhappy while I possess my son!"

"Ah! just so," said Albert; "here begins the trial. Do you know the decision we have come to, mother?"

"Have we come to any?"

"Yes; it is decided that you are to live at Marseilles, and that I am to leave for Africa, where I will earn for myself the right to use the name I now bear instead of the one I have thrown aside."



Mercedes sighed. "Well, mother, I yesterday engaged myself in the Spahis," added the young man, lowering his eyes with a certain feeling of shame, for even he was unconscious of the sublimity of his self-abasement. "I thought my body was my own, and that I might sell it. I yesterday took the place of another. I sold myself for more than I thought I was worth," he added, attempting to smile; "I fetched 2,000 francs."

"Then these 1,000 francs —" said Mercedes, shuddering.

"Are the half of the sum, mother; the other will be paid in a year."

Mercedes raised her eyes to heaven with an expression it would be impossible to describe, and tears, which had hitherto been restrained, now yielded to her emotion, and ran down her cheeks.

"The price of his blood!" she murmured.

"Yes, if I am killed," said Albert, laughing. "But I assure you, mother, I have a strong intention of defending my person; and I never felt half so strong an inclination to live as at present."

"Merciful Heaven!"

"Besides, mother, why should you make up your mind that I am to be killed? Has Lamoriciere, that Ney of the South, been killed? Has Changarnier been killed? Has Bedeau been killed? Has Morrel, whom we know, been killed? Think of your joy, mother, when you see me return with an embroidered uniform! I declare, I expect to look magnificent in it, and chose that regiment only from vanity."

Mercedes sighed while endeavoring to smile; the devoted mother felt she ought not to allow the whole weight of the sacrifice to fall upon her son.

"Well, now you understand, mother," continued Albert; "here are more than 4,000 francs settled on you; upon these you can live at least two years."

"Do you think so?" said Mercedes.

These words were uttered in so mournful a tone, that their real meaning did not escape Albert; he felt his heart beat, and taking his mother's hand within his own, he said, tenderly:

"Yes, you will live!"

"I shall live! then you will not leave me, Albert?"

"Mother, I must go," said Albert, in a firm, calm voice; "you love me too well to wish me to remain useless and idle with you; besides, I have signed."

"You will obey your own wish and the will of Heaven!"

"Not my own wish, mother, but reason — necessity. Are we not two despairing creatures? What is life to you? Nothing. What is life to me? Very little without you, mother; for, believe me, but for you I should have ceased to live on the day I doubted my father, and renounced his name! Well, I will live, if you promise me still to hope; and if you grant me the care for your future prospects, you will redouble my strength. Then I will go to the governor of Algeria; he has a royal heart, and is essentially a soldier; I will tell him my gloomy story. I will beg him to turn his eyes now and then towards me; and if he keep his word and interest himself for me, in six months I shall be an officer or dead. If I am an officer, your fortune is certain, for I shall have money enough for both; and, moreover, a name we shall both be proud of, since it will be our own. If I am killed — Well, then, mother, you can also die, and there will be an end of our misfortunes."

"It is well," replied Mercedes, with her eloquent glance; "you are right, my love; let us prove to those who are watching our actions that we are worthy of compassion."

"But let us not yield to gloomy apprehension," said the young man; "I assure you we are, or rather we shall be, very happy. You are a woman at once full of spirit and resignation; I have become simple in my tastes, and am

without passion, I hope. Once in service, I shall be rich — once in M. Dantes's house, you will be at rest. Let us strive, I beseech you — let us strive to be cheerful."

"Yes, let us strive, for you ought to live, and to be happy, Albert."

"And so our division is made, mother," said the young man, affecting ease of mind. "We can now part; come, I shall take your place."

"And you, dear boy?"

"I shall stay here for a few days longer; we must accustom ourselves to parting. I want recommendations, and some information relative to Africa. I will join you again at Marseilles."

"Well, be it so! let us part," said Mercedes, folding around her shoulders the only shawl she had taken away, and which, accidentally, happened to be a valuable black cashmere.

Albert gathered up his papers hastily, rang the bell, to pay the thirty francs he owed to the landlord, and, offering his arm to his mother, they descended the stairs. Some one was walking down before them, and this person, hearing the rustling of a silk dress, turned around.

"Debray!" muttered Albert.

"You, Morcerf!" replied the secretary, resting on the stairs. Curiosity had vanquished the desire of preserving his incognito; and he was recognized. It was indeed strange, in this unknown spot, to find the young man whose misfortunes had made so much noise in Paris.

"Morcerf!" repeated Debray.

Then, noticing, in the dim light, the still youthful and veiled figure of Madame de Morcerf:

"Pardon me!" he added, with a smile, "I leave you, Albert."

Albert understood his thoughts.

"Mother," he said, turning towards Mercedes, "this is M. Debray, secretary of the minister of the interior, once a friend of mine."

"How once?" stammered Debray; "what do you mean?"

"I say so, M. Debray, because I have no friends now, and ought not to have any. I thank you for having recognized me, sir."

Debray stepped forward and cordially pressed the hand of his interlocutor.

"Believe me, dear Albert," he said, with all the emotion he was capable of feeling, "believe me, I feel deeply for your misfortunes; and if in any way I can serve you, I am yours."

"Thank you, sir," said Albert, smiling. "In the midst of our misfortune, we are still rich enough not to require assistance from any one. We are leaving Paris, and when our journey is paid, we shall have 5,000 francs left."

The blood mounted to the temples of Debray, who held a million in his pocketbook; and, unimaginative as he was, he could not help reflecting that the same house had contained two women, one of whom, justly dishonored, had left it poor with 1,500,000 francs under her cloak, while the other, unjustly stricken, but sublime in her misfortune, was yet rich with a few deniers. This parallel disturbed his usual politeness; the philosophy he witnessed appalled him; he muttered a few words of general civility and ran downstairs.

That day the minister's clerks and the subordinates had a great deal to put up with from his ill humor. But the same night he found himself the possessor of a fine house, situated on the Boulevard de la Madeleine, and an income of 50,000 livres.

The next day, just as Debray was signing the deed, that is, about five o'clock in the afternoon, Madame de Morcerf, after having affectionately embraced her son, entered the coupé of the diligence, which was closed upon her.

A man was hidden in Lafitte's banking house, behind one of the little arched windows which are placed above each desk; he saw Mercedes enter the diligence and he also saw Albert withdraw.

Then he passed his hand across his forehead, which was clouded with doubt.

"Alas!" he exclaimed, "how can I restore the happiness I have taken away from these poor innocent creatures? God help me!"

## CHAPTER CVII.

## THE LIONS' DEN.

ONE division of La Force, in which the most dangerous and desperate prisoners are confined, is called the Court of Saint Bernard. The prisoners, in their expressive language, have named it the Lions' Den, probably because the captives possess teeth which frequently gnaw the bars, and sometimes the keepers also. It is a prison within a prison; the walls are double the thickness of the rest. The gratings are every day carefully examined by jailers, whose herculean proportions, and cold, pitiless expression, prove them to have been chosen to reign over their subjects from their superior activity and intelligence.

The courtyard of this quarter is enclosed by enormous walls, over which the sun glances obliquely, when it deigns to penetrate into this gulf of moral and physical deformity. On this paved yard are to be seen, pacing from morning till night, pale, care-worn, and haggard, like so many shadows, the men whom Justice holds beneath the steel she is sharpening. There, crouched against the side of the wall which attracts and retains the most heat, they may be seen sometimes talking to one another, but more frequently alone, watching the door, which sometimes opens to call forth one from the gloomy assemblage, or to throw in another outcast from society.

The Court of Saint Bernard has its own particular parlor; it is a long square, divided by two upright gratings, placed at a distance of three feet from one another, to prevent a visitor from shaking hands with or passing any-

thing to the prisoners. It is a wretched, damp, nay, even horrible spot, more especially when we consider the fearful conferences which have taken place between those iron bars.

And yet, frightful though this spot may be, it is considered as a kind of paradise to the men whose days are numbered; it is so rare for them to leave the Lions' Den for any other place than the Barrière Saint Jacques or the galleys!

In the court which we have attempted to describe, and from which a damp vapor was rising, a young man might be seen walking, with his hands in his pockets, who had excited much curiosity among the inhabitants of the "Den." The cut of his clothes would have made him pass for an elegant man, if these clothes had not been torn to ribbons; still they were not worn, and the fine cloth soon recovered its gloss in the parts which were still perfect, beneath the careful hands of the prisoner, who tried to make it assume the appearance of a new coat. He bestowed the same attention upon the cambric front of a shirt, which had considerably changed in color since his entrance into the prison; and he polished his varnished boots with the corner of a handkerchief embroidered with initials surmounted by a coronet.

Some of the inmates of the "Lions' Den" were watching the operations of the prisoner's toilet with considerable interest.

"See, the prince is beautifying himself," said one of the thieves.

"He is naturally very handsome," said another; "and if he had only a comb and some pomatum, he would soon eclipse all the gentlemen in white kids."

"His coat looks nearly new, and his boots are brilliant. It is pleasant to have such well-dressed brethren; and those gendarmes behaved shamefully. What jealousy, to tear such clothes!"

"He appears to be some one of consequence," said

another; "he dresses in first-rate style. And, then, to be here so young — oh! it is splendid!"

Meanwhile the object of this hideous admiration approached the wicket, against which one of the keepers was leaning.

"Come, sir," he said, "lend me twenty francs; you will soon be paid; you run no risks with me. Remember, I have relations who possess more millions than you have deniers. Come, I beseech you, lend me twenty francs so that I may buy a dressing-gown; it is intolerable always to be in coat and boots! And what a coat, sir, for a prince of the Cavalcanti!"

The keeper turned his back, and shrugged his shoulders; he did not even laugh at what would have caused any one else to do so; he had heard so many utter the same things — indeed, he heard nothing else.

"Come," said Andrea, "you are a man void of compassion! I will cause you to lose your place."

This made the keeper turn around, and he burst into a loud laugh. The prisoners then approached and formed a circle.

"I tell you that with that wretched sum," continued Andrea, "I could obtain a coat, and a room in which to receive the illustrious visitor I am daily expecting."

"He is right! he is right!" said the prisoners; "any one can see he is a gentleman!"

"Well, then, lend him the twenty francs," said the keeper, leaning on the other shoulder; "surely you will not refuse a comrade!"

"I am no comrade of these people," said the young man, proudly; "you have no right to insult me thus!"

"Do you hear him?" said the keeper, with a disagreeable smile; "he rates you handsomely. Come, lend him the twenty francs — eh?"

The thieves looked at one another with low murmurs, and a storm gathered over the head of the aristocratic prisoner, raised less by his own words than by the manner



of the keeper. The latter, sure of quelling the tempest when the waves became too violent, allowed them to rise to a certain pitch, that he might be revenged on the importunate solicitor; and, besides, it would afford him some recreation during the long day.

The thieves had already approached Andrea, some of whom commenced screaming:

"*La savate! La savate!*" a cruel operation, which consists in flogging any comrade who may have fallen into disgrace, not with an old shoe, but with an iron-heeled one.

Others proposed *l'anguille*, another kind of recreation, in which a handkerchief is filled with sand, pebbles, and halfpence, when they have them, which the wretches discharge like a flail against the head and shoulders of the unhappy sufferer.

"Let us horsewhip the fine gentleman!" said the others.

But Andrea, turned towards them, winked his eyes, rolled his tongue around his cheek, and smacked his lips in a manner equivalent to a hundred words among the bandits when forced to be silent. It was a masonic sign Caderousse had taught him. He was immediately recognized as one of them; the handkerchief was thrown down, and the iron-heeled shoe replaced on the foot of the wretch to whom it belonged. Some voices were heard to say that the gentleman was right; that he intended to be civil in his way, and that they would set the example of liberty of conscience; and the mob retired.

The keeper was so stupefied at this scene that he took Andrea by the hands and began examining his person, attributing the sudden submission of the inmates of the Lions' Den to something more substantial than mere fascination.

Andrea made no resistance, though he protested against it. Suddenly a voice was heard at the wicket.

"Benedetto!" exclaimed an inspector.

The keeper relaxed his hold.

"I am called," said Andrea.

"To the parlor!" said the same voice.

"You see, some one pays me a visit. Ah, my dear sir, you will see whether a Cavalcanti is to be treated like a common person!"

And Andrea, gliding through the court like a black shadow, rushed out through the wicket, leaving his comrades and even the keeper lost in wonder.

Certainly a call to the parlor had scarcely astonished Andrea less than themselves; for the wily youth, instead of making use of his privilege of writing to be claimed on his entry into La Force, had maintained a rigid silence.

"Everything," he said, "proves me to be under the protection of some powerful person: this sudden fortune, the facility with which I have overcome all obstacles; an unexpected family and an illustrious name awarded to me; gold showered down upon me, and the most splendid alliance about to be entered into. An unhappy lapse of fortune and the absence of my protector have reduced me, certainly, but not forever. The hand which has retreated for awhile will be again stretched forth to save me, at the very moment when I shall think myself sinking into the abyss! Why should I risk an imprudent step? It might alienate my protector. He has two means of extricating me from this dilemma; the one by a mysterious escape managed through bribery; the other by buying off my judges with gold. I will say and do nothing until I am convinced that he has quite abandoned me; and then ——"

Andrea had formed a plan which was tolerably clever. The unfortunate youth was intrepid in the attack, and rude in the defence. He had borne with the public prison, and with privations of all sorts; still, by degrees nature, or rather custom, had prevailed, and he suffered from being naked, dirty, and hungry. It was at this moment of *ennui* that the inspector's voice called him to the visiting-room.

Andrea felt his heart leap with joy. It was too soon for a visit from the *juge d'instruction*, and too late for one from the director of the prison or the doctor; it must, then, be the visitor he hoped for. Behind the grating of the room into which Andrea had been led, he saw, while his eyes dilated with surprise, the dark and intelligent face of M. Bertuccio, who was also gazing with sad astonishment upon the iron bars, the bolted doors, and the shadow which moved behind the other grating.

"Ah!" said Andrea, deeply affected.

"Good morning, Benedetto," said Bertuccio, with his deep, hollow voice.

"You—you!" said the young man, looking fearfully around him.

"Do you not recognize me, unhappy child?"

"Silence! be silent!" said Andrea, who knew the delicate sense of hearing possessed by the walls; "for Heaven's sake, do not speak so loud!"

"You wish to speak with me alone, do you not?" said Bertuccio.

"Oh, yes!"

"That is well!" And Bertuccio, feeling in his pockets, signed to a keeper whom he saw through the window of the wicket.

"Read!" he said.

"What is that?" asked Andrea.

"An order to conduct you to a room, and to allow you to talk with me."

"Oh!" cried Andrea, leaping with joy.

Then he mentally added, "Still my unknown protector! I am not forgotten. They wish for secrecy, since we are to converse in a private room. I understand Bertuccio has been sent by my protector."

The keeper spoke for a moment with a superior, then opened the iron gates, and conducted Andrea to a room on the first floor.

The room was whitewashed, as is the custom in prison;

but it looked quite brilliant to a prisoner, though a stove, a bed, a chair, and a table, formed the whole of its sumptuous furniture.

Bertuccio sat down upon the chair, Andrea threw himself upon the bed, the keeper retired.

"Now," said the steward, "what have you to tell me?"

"And you?" said Andrea.

"You speak first."

"Oh, no! You must have much to tell me, since you have come to seek me."

"Well, be it so! You have continued your course of villainy; you have robbed, you have assassinated."

"Good! If you had me taken to a private room only to tell me this, you might have spared yourself the trouble. I know all these things. But there are some with which, on the contrary, I am not acquainted; let us talk of those, if you please. Who sent you?"

"Come, come, you are going on quickly, M. Benedetto!"

"Yes, and to the point! Let us dispense with useless words. Who sends you?"

"No one."

"How did you know I was in prison?"

"I recognized you some time since as the insolent dandy who so gracefully mounted his horse in the Champs Elysées."

"Oh, the Champs Elysées! Ah, ah! we burn, as they say at some game. The Champs Elysées! Come, let us talk a little about my father."

"Who, then, am I?"

"You, sir! you are my adopted father. But it was not you, I presume, who placed at my disposal 100,000 francs, which I spent in four or five months; it was not you who manufactured an Italian gentleman for my father; it was not you who introduced me into the world, and had me invited to a certain dinner at Auteuil, which I fancy I am eating at this moment, in company with the most distinguished people in Paris — among the rest, with a certain

procureur du roi whose acquaintance I did very wrong not to cultivate, for he would have been very useful to me just now; it was not you, in fact, who bailed me for one or two millions when the fatal discovery of the *pot aux roses* took place. Come, speak, my worthy Corsican, speak!"

"What do you wish me to say?"

"I will help you. You were speaking of the Champs Elysées just now, worthy foster-father!"

"Well?"

"Well, in the Champs Elysées there resides a very rich gentleman."

"At whose house you robbed and murdered, did you not?"

"I believe I did."

"The Count of Monte-Cristo?"

"You have named him. Well, am I to rush into his arms, and strain him to my heart, crying, as they do in dramas, 'My father! my father'?"

"Do not let us jest," gravely replied Bertuccio; "and dare not to utter that name again as you have pronounced it."

"Bah!" said Andrea, a little overcome by the solemnity of Bertuccio's manner, "why not?"

"Because the person who bears it is too highly favored by Heaven to be the father of such a wretch as you!"

"Oh, these are fine words!"

"And there will be fine doings if you do not take care."

"Menaces! I do not fear them. I will say——"

"Do you think you are engaged with a pigmy like yourself?" said Bertuccio, in so calm a tone, and with so steadfast a look, that Andrea was moved to the very soul; "do you think you have to do with galley-slaves, or novices in the world? Benedetto, you are fallen into terrible hands; they are ready to open for you—make use of them! Do not play with the thunderbolt they have laid aside for a moment, but which they can take up again instantly, if you attempt to intercept their movements."

"My father—I will know who my father is!" said the obstinate youth; "I will perish if I must, but *will* know it. What does scandal signify to me? What possessions, what reputation have I? You great people always lose something by scandal, notwithstanding your millions. Come, who is my father?"

"I came to tell you."

"Ah!" cried Benedetto, his eyes sparkling with joy.

Just then the door opened, and the jailer, addressing himself to Bertuccio, said:

"Excuse me, sir, but the *juge d'instruction* is waiting for the prisoner."

"And so closes our interview," said Andrea to the worthy steward; "I wish the troublesome fellow were at the devil!"

"I will return to-morrow," said Bertuccio.

"Good! gendarmes, I am at your service. Ah, sir, do leave a few crowns for me at the gate, that I may have some things I am in need of!"

"It shall be done," replied Bertuccio.

Andrea extended his hand; Bertuccio kept his own in his pocket, and merely jingled a few pieces of money.

"That's what I mean," said Andrea, endeavoring to smile, quite overcome by the strange tranquillity of Bertuccio.

"Can I be deceived?" he murmured, as he stepped into the oblong and grated vehicle which they call "the salad basket." "Never mind, we shall see. Then to-morrow!" he added, turning towards Bertuccio.

"To-morrow," replied the steward.

## CHAPTER CVIII.

## THE JUDGE.

WE remember that the Abbé Busoni remained alone with Noirtier in the chamber of death, and that the old man and the priest were the sole guardians of the young girl's body. Perhaps it was the Christian exhortations of the abbé, perhaps his kind charity, perhaps his persuasive words which had restored the courage of Noirtier; for ever since he had conversed with the priest, his violent despair had yielded to a calm resignation, which surprised all who knew of his excessive affection for Valentine.

M. de Villefort had not seen his father since the morning of the death. The whole establishment had been changed; another valet de chambre was engaged for himself, a new servant for Noirtier; two women had entered Madame de Villefort's service; in fact, everywhere, to the concierge and coachman, new faces were presented to the different masters of the house, thus widening the division which had always existed between the members of the same family. The assizes, also, were about to commence; and Villefort, shut up in his room, exerted himself with feverish anxiety in drawing up the case against the murderer of Caderousse. This affair, like all those in which the Count of Monte-Cristo had interfered, caused a great sensation in Paris. The proofs were certainly not convincing, since they rested upon a few words written by an escaped galley-slave on his death-bed, and who might have been actuated by hatred or revenge in accusing his companion. But the mind of the procureur du roi was

made up; he felt assured that Benedetto was guilty, and he hoped, by his skill in conducting this aggravated case, to flatter his self-love, which was about the only vulnerable point left in his frozen heart.

The case was therefore prepared, owing to the incessant labor of Villefort, who wished it to be the first on the list in the coming assizes. He had been obliged to seclude himself more than ever, to evade the enormous number of applications presented to him for the purpose of obtaining tickets of admission to the court on the day of trial. And then, so short a time had elapsed since the death of poor Valentine, and the gloom which overshadowed the house was so recent, that no one wondered to see the father so absorbed in his professional duties, which were the only means he had of dissipating his grief.

Once, only, had Villefort seen his father; it was the day after that upon which Bertuccio had paid his second visit to Benedetto, when the latter was to learn his father's name. The magistrate, harassed and fatigued, had descended to the garden of his hotel, and in a gloomy mood, similar to that in which Tarquin lopped off the tallest poppies, he began knocking off with his cane the long and drying branches of the rose-trees, which, placed along the avenue, seemed like the spectres of the brilliant flowers which had bloomed in the past season. More than once he had reached that part of the garden where the famous paling stood overlooking the deserted enclosure; and always returning by the same path, he recommenced his walk, at the same pace and with the same gesture, when he accidentally turned his eyes towards the house, where he heard the sound of his son playing noisily, who had returned from school to spend the Sunday and Monday with his mother. While doing so, he observed M. Noirtier at one of the open windows, where the old man had been placed that he might enjoy the last rays of a sun which yet yielded some heat and was now shining upon the dying flowers and red leaves of the creeper which twined around the balcony.



The eye of the old man was riveted upon a spot which Villefort could scarcely distinguish. His glance was so full of hate, of ferocity, and savage impatience, that Villefort turned out of the path he had been pursuing to see upon what person this dark look was directed. Then he saw beneath a thick clump of linden-trees, which were nearly divested of foliage, Madame de Villefort sitting with a book in her hand, the perusal of which she frequently interrupted to smile upon her son, or to throw back his elastic ball, which he obstinately threw from the drawing-room into the garden. Villefort became pale; he understood the old man's meaning. Noirtier continued to look at the same object, but suddenly his glance was carried from the wife to the husband, and Villefort himself had to submit to the searching investigation of those eyes, which, while changing their object and even their language, had lost none of their menacing expression. Madame de Villefort, unconscious of all those passions that exhausted their fire over her head, at that moment held her son's ball, and was making signs to him to reclaim it with a kiss. Edward begged for a long while, the maternal kiss probably not offering sufficient recompense for the trouble he must take to obtain it; however, at length he decided, leaped out of the window into a cluster of heliotropes and daisies, and ran to his mother, his forehead streaming with perspiration. Madame de Villefort wiped his forehead, pressed her lips upon it, and sent him back with the ball in one hand and some bonbons in the other.

Villefort, drawn by an irresistible attraction, like that of the bird to the serpent, walked towards the house. As he approached it, Noirtier's gaze followed him, and his eyes appeared of such a fiery brightness that Villefort felt them pierce to the depths of his heart. In that earnest look might be read a deep reproach as well as a terrible menace. Then Noirtier raised his eyes to heaven, as though to remind his son of a forgotten oath.

"It is well, sir," replied Villefort from below, "it is well; have patience but one day longer; what I have said I will do."

Noirtier appeared calmed by these words, and turned his eyes with indifference to the other side. Villefort violently unbuttoned his great-coat, which seemed to strangle him, and, passing his livid hand across his forehead, entered his study.

The night was cold and still; the family had all retired to rest but Villefort, who alone remained up, and worked till five o'clock in the morning, reviewing the last interrogatories made the night before by the *juge d'instruction*, compiling the depositions of the witnesses, and putting the finishing stroke to the deed of accusation, which was one of the most energetic and best conceived of any he had yet delivered.

The next day, Monday, was the first sitting of the assizes. The morning rose bleak and gloomy, and Villefort saw the dim gray light shine upon the lines he had traced in red ink. The magistrate had slept for a short time while the lamp sent forth its final struggles; its flickerings awoke him, and he found his fingers as damp and purple as though they had been dipped in blood. He opened the window; a bright yellow streak crossed the sky, and seemed to divide in half the poplars, which stood out in black relief on the horizon. In the clover fields beyond the chestnut-trees, a lark was mounting up to heaven while pouring out her clear morning song. The damps of the dew bathed the head of M. de Villefort and refreshed his memory.

"To-day," he said, with an effort, "to-day the man who holds the knife of justice must strike wherever there is guilt."

Involuntarily his eyes wandered towards the window of Noirtier's room, whence he had seen him the preceding night. The curtain was drawn, and yet the image of his father was so vivid to his mind, that he addressed the

closed window as though it has been open, and as if through the opening he had beheld the menacing old man.

"Yes," he murmured — "yes, be satisfied."

His head dropped upon his chest, and in this position he paced his study; then he threw himself, dressed as he was, upon a sofa, less to sleep than to rest his limbs, cramped with cold and study. By degrees every one woke; Villefort from his study heard the successive noises which constitute the life of a house; the opening and shutting of doors, the ringing of Madame de Villefort's bell to summon the waiting-maid, mingled with the first shouts of the child, who rose full of the enjoyment of his age. Villefort also rang; his new valet de chambre brought him the papers, and with them a cup of chocolate.

"What are you bringing me?" said he.

"A cup of chocolate."

"I did not ask for it. Who has paid me this attention?"

"My mistress, sir. She said you would have to speak a great deal on the case of the murder, and that you should take something to keep up your strength;" the valet placed the cup on the table nearest to the sofa, which was, like all the rest, covered with papers, and then left the room.

Villefort looked for an instant with a gloomy expression, then, suddenly taking it up, with a nervous motion he swallowed its contents at one draught. It might have been thought that he hoped the beverage would be mortal, and that he sought for death to deliver him from a duty which he would rather die than fulfill. He then rose and paced his room, with a smile it would have been terrible to witness. The chocolate was inoffensive, for M. de Villefort felt no effects. The breakfast hour arrived, but M. de Villefort was not at table. The valet de chambre re-entered.

"Madame de Villefort wishes to remind you, sir," he

said, "that eleven o'clock has just struck, and the trial commences at twelve."

"Well," said Villefort; "what then?"

"Madame de Villefort is dressed; she is quite ready, and wishes to know if she is to accompany you, sir?"

"Where to?"

"To the Palais."

"What to do?"

"My mistress wishes much to be present at the trial."

"Ah!" said Villefort, with startling accent; "does she wish that?"

The servant drew back and said:

"If you wish to go alone, sir, I will go and tell my mistress."

Villefort remained silent for a moment, and dented his pale cheeks with his nails.

"Tell your mistress," he at length answered, "that I wish to speak to her, and I beg she will wait for me in her own room."

"Yes, sir."

"Then come to dress and shave me."

"Directly, sir."

The valet de chambre reappeared instantly, and having shaved his master, assisted him to dress entirely in black. When he had finished, he said:

"My mistress said she should expect you, sir, as soon as you had finished dressing."

"I am going to her." And Villefort, with his papers under his arm and hat in hand, directed his steps towards the apartment of his wife. At the door he paused for a moment to wipe his damp, pale brow. He then entered the room.

Madame de Villefort was sitting on an ottoman, and impatiently turning over the leaves of some newspapers and pamphlets which young Edward, by way of amusing himself, was tearing in pieces before his mother could finish reading them. She was dressed to go out; her

bonnet was placed beside her on a chair, and her gloves were on her hands.

"Ah! you are here, sir," she said, in her naturally calm voice; "but how pale you are! Have you been working all night? Why did you not come down to breakfast? Well, will you take me, or shall I take Edward?"

Madame de Villefort had multiplied her questions in order to gain one answer, but to all her inquiries M. de Villefort remained mute and cold as a statue.

"Edward!" said Villefort, fixing an imperious glance on the child, "go and play in the drawing-room, my dear, I wish to speak to your mamma."

Madame de Villefort shuddered at the sight of that cold countenance, that resolute tone, and the awfully strange preliminaries. Edward raised his head, looked at his mother, and then, finding that she did not confirm the order, began cutting off the heads of his leaden soldiers.

"Edward!" cried M. de Villefort, so harshly that the child started on the carpet, "do you hear me? Go!"

The child, unaccustomed to such treatment, rose, pale and trembling; it would be difficult to say whether his emotion were caused by fear or passion. His father went up to him, took him in his arms, and kissed his forehead.

"Go," he said, "go, my child."

Edward ran out. M. de Villefort went to the door, which he closed behind the child, and bolted.

"Oh, heavens!" said the young woman, endeavoring to read her husband's inmost thoughts, while a smile passed over her countenance, which froze the impassibility of Villefort. "What is the matter?"

"Madame, where do you keep the poison you generally use?" said the magistrate, without any introduction, placing himself between his wife and the door.

Madame de Villefort must have experienced somewhat of the sensation of a bird which, looking up, sees the murderous spring closed over its head. A hoarse, broken tone,

which was neither a cry nor a sigh, escaped from her, while she became deadly pale.

"Sir," she said, "I — I do not understand you." And as in her first paroxysm of terror she had raised herself from the sofa, in the next, perhaps stronger than the other, she fell down again on the cushions.

"I asked you," continued Villefort, in a perfectly calm tone, "where you conceal the poison by the aid of which you have killed my father-in-law, M. de Saint-Meran, my mother-in-law, Madame de Saint-Meran, Barrois, and my daughter Valentine?"

"Ah, sir!" exclaimed Madame de Villefort, clasping her hands, "what do you say?"

"It is not for you to interrogate, but to answer."

"Is it to the judge or to the husband?" stammered Madame de Villefort.

"To the judge — to the judge, madame!"

It was terrible to behold the frightful pallor of that woman, the anguish of her look, the trembling of her whole frame.

"Ah, sir!" she muttered, "ah, sir!" and this was all.

"You do not answer, madame!" exclaimed the terrible interrogator. Then he added, with a smile yet more terrible than his anger, "It is true, then; you do not deny it?"

She moved forward.

"And you cannot deny it," added Villefort, extending his hand towards her as though to seize her in the name of justice. "You have accomplished these different crimes with impudent address, but which could only deceive those whose affection for you blinded them. Since the death of Madame de Saint-Meran I have known that a poisoner lived in my house. M. d'Avrigny warned me of it. After the death of Barrois my suspicions were directed towards an angel — those suspicions which, even when there is no crime, are always alive in my heart; but after the death of Valentine there has been no doubt in my mind, madame, and not only in mine but in those of others; thus your

crime, known by two persons, suspected by many, will soon become public; and, as I told you just now, you no longer speak to the husband, but to the judge."

The young woman hid her face in her hands.

"Oh, sir!" she stammered, "I beseech you, do not believe appearances."

"Are you, then, a coward?" cried Villefort, in a contemptuous voice. "But I have always remarked that poisoners were cowards. Can you be a coward, you who have had the courage to witness the death of two old men and a young girl murdered by you?"

"Sir! sir!"

"Can you be a coward," continued Villefort, with increased excitement, "you who could count, one by one, the minutes of four death agonies? *You*, who have arranged your infernal plans, and removed the beverages with a talent and precision almost miraculous? Have you, then, who have calculated everything with such nicety, have you forgotten to calculate one thing; I mean where the revelation of your crimes will lead you to? Oh! it is impossible — you must have saved some surer, more subtle and deadly poison than any other, that you might escape the punishment you deserve. You have done this — I hope so, at least."

Madame de Villefort stretched out her hands and fell on her knees.

"I understand," he said, "you confess; but a confession made to the judges, a confession made at the last moment, extorted when the crime cannot be denied, diminishes not the punishment inflicted on the guilty."

"The punishment!" exclaimed Madame de Villefort, "the punishment, sir! Twice you have pronounced that word!"

"Certainly. Did you hope to escape it because you were four times guilty? Did you think the punishment would be withheld because you are the wife of him who pronounces it? No, madame, no! The scaffold awaits

the poisoner, whoever she may be, unless, as I just said, the poisoner has taken the precaution of keeping for herself a few drops of her deadliest poison."

Madame de Villefort uttered a wild cry, and a hideous and uncontrollable terror spread over her distorted features.

"Oh! do not fear the scaffold, madame," said the magistrate, "I will not dishonor you, since that would be to dishonor myself; no! if you have heard me distinctly, you will understand that you are not to die on the scaffold."

"No! I did not understand; what do you mean?" stammered the unhappy woman, completely overwhelmed.

"I mean that the wife of the first magistrate in the capital shall not by her infamy soil an unblemished name — that she shall not with one blow dishonor her husband and her child."

"No, no — oh, no!"

"Well, madame, it will be a laudable action on your part, and I will thank you for it!"

"You will thank me — for what?"

"For what you have just said."

"What did I say? Oh, my brain whirls; I no longer understand anything. Oh, heavens!" And she rose, with her hair dishevelled and her lips foaming.

"Have you answered the question I put to you on entering the room? Where do you keep the poison you generally use, madame?"

Madame de Villefort raised her arms to heaven, and convulsively struck one hand against the other.

"No, no!" she vociferated; "no, you cannot wish that?"

"What I do wish, madame, is that you should not perish on the scaffold. Do you understand?" asked Villefort.

"Oh, mercy, mercy, sir!"

"What I require is, that justice be done. I am on the earth to punish, madame," he added, with a flaming glance; "any other woman, were it the queen herself, I would send



to the executioner; but to you I shall be merciful. To you I will say, 'Have you not, madame, put aside some of the surest, deadliest, most speedy poison?'"

"Oh! pardon me, sir; let me live!"

"She is cowardly," said Villefort.

"Reflect that I am your wife."

"You are a poisoner."

"In the name of Heaven!"

"No!"

"In the name of the love you once bore me!"

"No, no!"

"In the name of our child! Ah, for the sake of our child, let me live!"

"No! no! no! I tell you; one day, if I allow you to live, you will perhaps kill him as you have the others!"

"I! — kill my boy?" cried the distracted mother, rushing towards Villefort, "I kill my son! Ha! ha! ha!" and a frightful, demoniac laugh finished the sentence, which was lost in a hoarse rattle.

Madame de Villefort fell at her husband's feet. He approached her.

"Think of it, madame," he said; "if, on my return, justice has not been satisfied, I will denounce you with my own mouth, and arrest you with my own hands."

She listened, panting, overwhelmed, crushed; her eye alone lived and glared horribly.

"Do you understand me?" he said. "I am going down there to pronounce the sentence of death against a murderer. If I find you alive on my return, you shall sleep to-night in the Conciergerie!"

Madame de Villefort sighed; her nerves gave way, and she sank on the carpet.

The procureur du roi seemed to experience a sensation of pity: he looked upon her less severely, and bowing to her, said slowly:

"Farewell, madame, farewell!"

That farewell struck Madame de Villefort like the executioner's knife. She fainted.

The procureur du roi went out, after having double-locked the door.

## CHAPTER CIX.

## THE ASSIZES.

THE Benedetto affair, as it was called in the Palais, and by the people in general, had produced a tremendous sensation. Frequenting the Café de Paris, the Boulevard de Gand, and the Bois de Bologne, during his brief career of splendor, the false Cavalcanti had formed a host of acquaintances. The papers had related his various adventures, both as the man of fashion and the galley-slave; and as every one who had been personally acquainted with the Prince Cavalcanti experienced a lively curiosity in his fate, they all determined to spare no trouble in endeavoring to witness the trial of M. Benedetto for the murder of his comrade. In the eyes of many Benedetto appeared, if not a victim to, at least an instance of, the fallibility of the law. M. Cavalcanti, his father, had been seen in Paris, and it was expected he would reappear to claim the illustrious outcast. Many, also, who were not aware of the circumstances attending his withdrawal from Paris, were struck with the worthy appearance, the gentlemanly bearing, and the knowledge of the world displayed by the old patrician, who certainly played the nobleman very well, so long as he said nothing, and made no arithmetical calculations. As for the accused himself, many remembered him as being so amiable, so handsome, and so liberal, that they chose to think him the victim of some conspiracy, since in this world large fortunes frequently excite the malevolence and jealousy of some unknown enemy.

Every one, therefore, ran to the court, some to witness the sight, others to comment upon it. From seven o'clock in the morning a crowd was stationed at the iron gates, and an hour before the trial commenced the hall was full of the privileged. Before the entrance of the magistrates, and, indeed, frequently afterwards, a court of justice, on days when some especial trial is to take place, resembles a drawing-room, where many persons recognize each other, and converse, if they can do so without losing their seats, and when they are separated by too great a number of lawyers, communicate by signs.

It was one of those magnificent autumn days, which make amends for a short summer; the clouds which M. de Villefort had perceived at sunrise had all disappeared as if by magic, and one of the softest and most brilliant days of September shone forth in all its splendor.

Beauchamp, one of the kings of the press, and therefore claiming the right of a throne everywhere, was looking around on every side. He perceived Château-Renaud and Debray, who had just gained the good graces of a sergeant-de-ville, and who had persuaded the latter to let them stand before instead of behind him, as he ought to have done. The worthy agent had recognized the minister's secretary and the millionaire, and by the way of paying extra attention to his noble neighbors, promised to keep their places while they paid a visit to Beauchamp.

"Well!" said Beauchamp, "we shall see our friend."

"Yes, indeed," replied Debray. "That worthy prince. Deuce take those Indian princes!"

"A man, too, who could boast of Dante for a genealogist, and could reckon as far back as the Divina Commedia."

"A nobility of the rope!" said Château-Renaud, phlegmatically.

"He will be condemned, will he not?" asked Debray of Beauchamp.

"My dear fellow, I think we should ask you that question; you know such news much better than we do; did you see the president at the minister's last night?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"Something which will surprise you."

"Oh! make haste and tell me, then; it is a long time since that has happened."

"Well, he told me that Benedetto, who is considered a serpent of subtlety and a giant of cunning, is really but a very subordinate, silly rascal, and altogether unworthy of the experiments that will be made on his phrenological organs after his death."

"Bah!" said Beauchamp; "he played the prince very well."

"Yes; for you who detest those unhappy princes, Beauchamp, and are always delighted to find fault with them; but not for me, who discover a gentleman by instinct, and who scent out an aristocratic family like a very bloodhound of heraldry."

"Then you never believed in the principality?"

"Yes; in the principality, but not in the prince."

"Not so bad," said Beauchamp: "still, I assume he passed very well with many people; I saw him at the minister's houses."

"Ah, yes!" said Château-Renaud. "The idea of thinking ministers understand anything about princes!"

"There is something in what you have just said," said Beauchamp, laughing.

"But," said Debray to Beauchamp, "if I spoke to the president, *you* must have been with the procureur du roi."

"It was an impossibility; for the last week M. de Villefort has secluded himself. It is natural enough; this strange chain of domestic afflictions followed by the no less strange death of his daughter ——"

"Strange! What do you mean, Beauchamp?"

"Oh, yes! Do you pretend that all this has been unobserved at the minister's?" said Beauchamp, placing his eyeglass in his eye, where he tried to make it remain.

"My dear sir," said Château-Renaud, "allow me to tell you that you do not understand that manœuvre with the eyeglass half so well as Debray. Give him a lesson, Debray."

"Stay," said Beauchamp, "surely I am not deceived."

"What is it?"

"It is she."

"Whom do you mean?"

"They said she had left."

"Mademoiselle Eugenie?" said Château-Renaud; "has she returned?"

"No! but her mother."

"Madame Danglars? Nonsense! Impossible!" said Château-Renaud, "only ten days after the flight of her daughter, and three days from the bankruptcy of her husband!"

Debray colored slightly, and followed with his eyes the direction of Beauchamp's glance.

"Come!" he said; "it is only a veiled lady, some foreign princess, perhaps the mother of Cavalcanti. But you were just speaking on a very interesting topic, Beauchamp."

"I?"

"Yes; you were telling us about the extraordinary death of Valentine."

"Ah, yes! so I was. But how is it that Madame de Villefort is not here?"

"Poor, dear woman!" said Debray, "she is no doubt occupied in distilling balm for the hospitals, or in making cosmetics for herself or friends. Do you know she spends two or three thousand crowns a year in this amusement? But I wonder she is not here. I should have been pleased to see her, for I like her very much."

"And I hate her," said Château-Renaud.

"Why?"

"I do not know. Why do we love? Why do we hate? I detest her from antipathy."

"Or rather by instinct?"

"Perhaps so. But to return to what you were saying, Beauchamp."

"Well! do you know why people die so fast in M. de Villefort's house?"

"Talking of that," said Debray, "Madame —— was making inquiries about that house, which for the last three months has been hung with black."

"Who is Madame ——?" asked Château-Renaud.

"The minister's wife, *pardieu!*"

"Oh, your pardon! I never visit ministers; I leave that to the princes."

"Really, you were before only sparkling, but now you are brilliant; take compassion on us, or, like Jupiter, you will burn us."

"I will not speak again!" said Château-Renaud; "pray have compassion upon me, and do not take up every word I say."

"Come, let us endeavor to hear the end of our story, Beauchamp; I told you that yesterday Madame —— made inquiries of me upon the subject; enlighten me, and I will then communicate my information to her."

"Well, gentlemen, the reason people die so fast at M. Villefort's is, that there is an assassin in the house!"

The two young men shuddered, for the same idea had more than once occurred to them.

"And who is the assassin?" they asked together.

"Young Edward!"

A burst of laughter from the auditors did not in the least disconcert the speaker, who continued:

"Yes, gentlemen, Edward, who is quite an adept in the art of killing."

"You are jesting."

"Not at all. I yesterday engaged a servant, who had just left M. de Villefort — I intend sending him away to-

morrow, for he eats so enormously to make up for the fast imposed upon him by his terror in that house. Well! listen to me."

"We are listening."

"It appears the dear child has obtained possession of a bottle containing some drug, which he every now and then uses against those who have displeased him. First, M. and Madame de Saint-Meran incurred his displeasure, so he poured out three drops of his elixir — three drops were sufficient; then followed Barrois, the old servant of M. Noirtier, who sometimes rebuffed this little wretch — he therefore received the same quantity of the elixir; the same happened to Valentine, of whom he was jealous; he gave her the same dose as the others, and all was over for her as well as the rest."

"Why, what nonsense are you telling us?" said Château-Renaud.

"Yes, it is an extraordinary story!" said Beauchamp; "is it not?"

"It is absurd," said Debray.

"Ah!" said Beauchamp, "you doubt me? Well, you can ask my servant, or rather him who will no longer be my servant to-morrow: it was the talk of the house."

"And this elixir, where is it? what is it?"

"The child conceals it."

"But where did he find it?"

"In his mother's laboratory."

"Does his mother, then, keep poisons in her laboratory?"

"How can I tell? You are questioning me like a procureur du roi. I only repeat what I have been told, and, like my author, I can do no more. The poor wretch would eat nothing, from fear."

"It is incredible!"

"No, my dear fellow, it is not at all incredible. You saw the child pass through the Rue Richelieu last year, who amused himself with killing his brothers and sisters



by sticking pins in their ears while they slept. The generation who follow us are very precocious!"

"Come, Beauchamp," said Château-Renaud, "I will bet anything you do not believe a word of all you have been telling us!"

"I do not see the Count of Monte-Cristo here!"

"He is worn out," said Debray; "besides, he could not well appear in public, since he has been the dupe of the Cavalcanti, who, it appears, presented themselves to him with false letters of credit, and cheated him out of 100,000 francs upon the hypothesis of this principality."

"By the way, M. de Château-Renaud," asked Beauchamp, "how is Morrel?"

"*Ma foi!* I have called three times without once seeing him. Still, his sister did not seem uneasy, and told me that though she had not seen him for two or three days she was sure he was well."

"Ah, now I think of it, the Count of Monte-Cristo cannot appear in the hall!" said Beauchamp.

"Why not?"

"Because he is an actor in the drama."

"Has he assassinated any one, then?"

"No, on the contrary, they wished to assassinate him. You know that it was in leaving his house that M. de Caderousse was murdered by his friend Benedetto. You know that the famous waistcoat was found in his house, containing the letter which stopped the signature of the marriage contract. Do you see the waistcoat? There it is, all blood-stained, on the desk as a testimony of the crime."

"Ah, very good!"

"Hush, gentlemen! here is the court; let us go back to our places." A noise was heard in the hall; the sergeant-de-ville called his two *protégés* with an energetic "Hem!" and the doorkeeper, appearing, called out, with that shrill voice peculiar to his order, even in the days of Beaumarchais:

"The Court, gentlemen!"

## CHAPTER CX.

## THE DEED OF ACCUSATION.

THE judges took their places in the midst of the most profound silence; the jury took their seats. M. de Villefort, the object of unusual attention, and we had almost said of general admiration, sat in the armchair, and cast a tranquil glance around him. Every person looked with astonishment on that grave and severe face, the calm expression of which personal griefs had been unable to disturb; and the aspect of a man who was a stranger to all human emotions excited a kind of terror.

"Gendarmes!" said the president, "lead in the accused."

At these words the public attention became more intense, and all eyes were turned towards the door through which Benedetto was to enter. The door soon opened, and the accused appeared.

The same impression was experienced by all present; and no one was deceived by the expression of his countenance. His features bore no sign of that deep emotion which stops the beating of the heart and blanches the cheek. His hands, gracefully placed, one upon his hat, the other in the opening of his white waistcoat, were not at all tremulous; his eye was calm, and even brilliant. Scarcely had he entered the hall when he glanced at the whole body of magistrates and assistants; his eye rested longer on the president, and still more so on the procureur du roi.

By the side of Andrea was placed the lawyer who was to conduct his defence, and who had been chosen by the

court; for Andrea disdained to pay any attention to those details, to which he appeared to attach no importance. The lawyer was a young man with light hair, and whose face expressed a hundred times more emotion than that which characterized the prisoner.

The president called for the deed of accusation, corrected, as we know, by the clever and implacable pen of De Villefort.

During the reading of this, which was long, the public attention was continually drawn towards Andrea, who bore the ordeal with Spartan unconcern.

Villefort had never been so concise and eloquent. The crime was represented under the liveliest colors; the former life of the prisoner, his transformation, a review of his life from the earliest period, were set forth with all the talent that a knowledge of human life could furnish to a mind like that of a *procureur du roi*. Benedetto was thus forever lost in public opinion before the sentence of the law could be pronounced.

Andrea paid no attention to the successive charges which were brought against him. M. de Villefort, who examined him attentively, and who no doubt practised upon him all the psychological studies he was accustomed to use, in vain endeavored to make him lower his eye, notwithstanding the depth and profundity of his gaze.

At length the deed was read.

"Accused," said the president, "your name and surname?"

Andrea rose. "Excuse me, M. le president," he said, in a clear voice, "but I see you are going to adopt a course of questions through which I cannot follow you. I have an idea, which I will explain by and by, of making an exception to the usual form of accusation. Allow me, then, if you please, to answer in different order, or I will not do so at all."

The astonished president looked at the jury, who them-

selves looked upon the procureur du roi. The whole assembly manifested great surprise. But Andrea appeared quite unmoved.

"Your age?" said the president. "Will you answer that question?"

"I will answer that question as well as the rest, M. le president, but in its turn."

"Your age?" repeated the president.

"I am twenty-one years old; or rather shall be in a few days, as I was born on the night of the 27th of September, 1817."

M. de Villefort, who was busy taking down some notes, raised his head at the mention of this date.

"Where were you born?" continued the president.

"At Auteuil, near Paris."

M. de Villefort a second time raised his head, looking at Benedetto as if he had been gazing at the head of Medusa, and became livid.

As for Benedetto, he gracefully wiped his lips with a fine cambric pocket-handkerchief.

"Your profession?"

"First I was a forger," answered Andrea, as calmly as possible; "then I became a thief, and lately have become an assassin."

A murmur, or rather storm, of indignation burst from all parts of the assembly. The judges themselves appeared stupefied; and the jury manifested tokens of disgust for a stoicism so unexpected from a fashionable man.

M. de Villefort pressed his hand upon his brow, which, at first pallid, had become red and burning; then he suddenly rose, and looked around as though he had lost his senses—he wanted air.

"Are you looking for anything, M. le procureur du roi?" asked Benedetto, with his most pleasing smile.

M. de Villefort answered nothing, but sat, or rather threw himself, down again upon his chair.

"And now, prisoner, will you consent to tell your

name?" said the president. "The brutal affectation with which you have enumerated and classified your crimes calls for a severe reprimand on the part of the court, both in the name of morality and for the respect due to humanity. You appear to consider this a point of honor, and it may be for this reason you have delayed acknowledging your name. You wished it to be preceded by all these titles."

"It is quite wonderful, M. le president, how entirely you have read my thoughts," said Benedetto, in his softest voice and most polite manner. "This is, indeed, the reason why I begged you to alter the order of the questions."

The public astonishment had reached its height. There was no longer any deceit or bravado in the manner of the accused. The audience seemed to anticipate some thunder-cloud about to burst over the gloomy scene.

"Well!" said the president, "your name?"

"I cannot tell you my name, since I do not know it; but I know my father's, and will pronounce it."

"Repeat your father's name," said the president.

Not a whisper, not a breath was heard in that vast assembly; every one waited anxiously.

"My father is the procureur du roi," replied Andrea, calmly.

"The procureur du roi!" said the president, stupefied, and without noticing the agitation which spread over the face of M. de Villefort; "the procureur du roi!"

"Yes; and if you wish to know his name, I will tell it—he is named Villefort."

The explosion which had been so long restrained, from a feeling of respect to the court of justice, now burst forth like thunder from the breasts of all present; the court itself did not seek to restrain the movement of the multitude. The exclamations, the insults addressed to Benedetto, who remained perfectly unconcerned, the energetic gestures, the movement of the gendarmes, the sneers of the

scum of the crowd, always sure to rise to the surface in case of any disturbance, all this lasted five minutes, before the doorkeepers and magistrates were able to restore silence. In the midst of this tumult the voice of the president was heard to exclaim :

“Are you playing with justice, accused, and do you dare set your fellow-citizens an example of disorder which, even in these times, has never been equalled ?”

Several persons hurried up to M. de Villefort, who was nearly buried in his chair, offering him consolation, encouragement, and protestations of zeal and sympathy. Order was re-established in the hall, with the exception of a few who still moved and whispered. A lady, it was said, had just fainted; they had supplied her with a smelling-bottle, and she had recovered. During the scene of tumult, Andrea had turned his smiling face towards the assembly; then, leaning with one hand on the oaken rail of his bench in the most graceful attitude possible, he said :

“Gentlemen, I assure you I had no idea of insulting the court, or of making a useless disturbance in the presence of this honorable assembly. They ask me my age; I tell it. They ask me where I was born; I answer. They ask me my name; I cannot give it, since my parents abandoned me. But though I cannot give my own name, not possessing one, I can tell them my father’s. Now I repeat my father is named M. de Villefort, and I am ready to prove it.”

There was an energy, a conviction, and a sincerity in the manner of the young man which silenced the tumult. All eyes were turned for a moment towards the procureur du roi, who sat as motionless as though a thunderbolt had changed him into a corpse.

“Gentlemen,” said Andrea, commanding silence by his voice and manner, “I owe you the proofs and explanations of what I have said.”

“But,” said the irritated president, “you called your-

self Benedetto, declared yourself an orphan, and claimed Corsica as your country."

"I said anything I pleased, in order that the solemn declaration I have just made should not be withheld, which otherwise would certainly have been the case. I now repeat that I was born at Auteuil on the night of the 27th of September, and that I am the son of the *procureur du roi*, M. de Villefort. Do you wish for any further details? I will give them. I was born in No. 28 Rue de la Fontaine, in a room hung with red damask; my father took me in his arms, telling my mother I was dead; wrapped me in a napkin marked with an H and an N, and carried me into the garden, where he buried me alive."

A shudder ran through the assembly when they saw the confidence of the prisoner increased in proportion with the terror of M. de Villefort.

"But how have you become acquainted with all these details?" asked the president.

"I will tell you, M. le president. A man who had sworn vengeance against my father and had long watched his opportunity to kill him, had introduced himself that night into the garden in which my father buried me. He was concealed in a thicket; he saw my father bury something in the ground, and stabbed him in the midst of the operation; then thinking the deposit might contain some treasure, he turned up the ground and found me still living. The man carried me to the hospital for *enfants trouvés*, where I was inscribed under the number 37. Three months afterwards a woman travelled from Rogliano to Paris to fetch me, and, having claimed me as her son, carried me away. Thus, you see, though born in Paris, I was brought up in Corsica."

There was a moment's silence, during which one could have fancied the hall empty, so profound was the stillness.

"Proceed!" said the president.

"Certainly, I might have lived happily among those good people who adopted me, but my perverse disposition

prevailed over the virtues which my adopted mother endeavored to instil into my heart. I increased in wickedness till I committed a crime. One day, when I cursed Providence for making me so wicked and ordaining me to such a fate, my adopted father said to me, 'Do not blaspheme, unhappy child! the crime is your father's — your father's, who devoted you to death, or to a life of misery in case by a miracle you should escape his doom.' Since then I ceased to blaspheme, but I cursed my father. This is why I have uttered the words for which you blame me; this is why I have filled this whole assembly with horror. If I have committed an additional crime, punish me; but if you will allow that ever since the day of my birth my fate has been sad, bitter, and lamentable, then pity me."

"But your mother?" asked the president.

"My mother thought me dead; she is not guilty. I did not even wish to know her name, nor do I know it."

Just then a piercing cry, ending in a sob, burst from the centre of the crowd who encircled the lady who had before fainted, and who now fell into a violent fit of hysterics. She was carried out of the hall, and in doing so, the thick veil which concealed her features dropped off, and Madame Danglars was recognized. Notwithstanding his shattered nerves, the stunning sensation in his ears, and the species of madness which turned his brain, Villefort arose as he perceived her.

"The proofs! the proofs!" said the president; "remember, this tissue of horrors must be supported by the clearest proofs."

"The proofs," said Benedetto, laughing, — "do you want proofs?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, look at M. de Villefort, and then ask me for proofs."

Every one turned towards the procureur du roi, who, unable to bear the universal gaze now riveted on him alone, advanced staggering into the midst of the tribunal, with



his hair dishevelled, and his face indented with the mark of his nails. The whole assembly uttered a long murmur of astonishment.

"Father!" said Benedetto, "I am asked for proofs; do you wish me to give them?"

"No, no; it is useless!" stammered M. de Villefort, in a hoarse voice; "no, it is useless!"

"How useless?" cried the president; "what do you mean?"

"I mean that I feel it impossible to struggle against the deadly weight that crushes me. Gentlemen, I know I am in the hands of an avenging God! We need no proofs; everything related by this young man is true."

A dull, gloomy silence, like that which precedes some awful phenomenon of nature, pervaded the assembly, who shuddered in dismay.

"What! M. de Villefort," cried the president, "do you yield to an hallucination? What! are you no longer in possession of your senses? This strange, unexpected, terrible accusation has disordered your reason. Come, recover."

The procureur du roi dropped his head; his teeth chattered like those of a man under a violent attack of fever, and yet he was deadly pale.

"I am in possession of all my senses, sir," he said; "my body alone suffers, as you may suppose. I acknowledge myself guilty of all the young man has brought against me, and from this hour hold myself under the authority of the procureur du roi who will succeed me."

As he spoke these words, with a hoarse, choking voice, he staggered towards the door, which was mechanically opened by a doorkeeper. The whole assembly was dumb with astonishment at the revelation and confession which had produced a catastrophe so different from that which had been expected during the last fortnight by the Parisian world.

"Well," said Beauchamp, "let them now say that drama is unnatural!"

*"Ma foi !"* said Château-Renaud, "I would rather end my career like M. de Morcerf; a pistol-shot seems quite delightful compared with this catastrophe."

"And so he has committed murder!" said Beauchamp.

"And I, who thought of marrying his daughter," said Debray. "She did well to die, poor girl!"

"The sitting is adjourned, gentlemen," said the president; "fresh inquiries will be made, and the case will be tried next session by another magistrate!"

As for Andrea, who continued as calm and more interesting than ever, he left the hall, escorted by gendarmes, who involuntarily paid him some attention.

"Well, what do you think of this, my fine fellow?" asked Debray of the sergeant-de-ville, slipping a louis into his hand.

"There will be extenuating circumstances," he replied.

## CHAPTER CXI.

## EXPIATION.

NOTWITHSTANDING the density of the crowd, M. de Villefort saw it open before him. There is something so awe-inspiring in great afflictions, that even in the worst times the first emotion of a crowd has generally been to sympathize with the sufferer in a great catastrophe. Many people have been assassinated in a tumult; but even criminals have rarely been insulted during their trial.

Thus Villefort passed through the mass of spectators and officers of the Palais and withdrew. Though he had acknowledged his guilt, he was protected by his grief. There are some situations which men understand by instinct, though their reason cannot explain them; in such cases the greatest orator is he who utters the loudest and most natural cry, which conveys a whole story to the mob. It would be difficult to describe the state of the stupor in which Villefort left the Palais. Every pulse beat with feverish excitement, every nerve was strained, every vein swollen, and every part of the body seemed to suffer distinctly from the rest, thus multiplying his agony a thousand-fold. Habit alone guided him through the passage; he threw aside his magisterial robe; he could not bear the weight on his shoulders. Having staggered as far as the Rue Dauphine, he perceived his carriage, awoke his sleeping coachman by opening the door himself, threw himself on the cushions, and pointed towards the Faubourg Saint Honore; the carriage drove on. All the weight of his fallen fortune seemed suddenly to crush him; he could

not foresee the consequences; he could not contemplate the future with the indifference of a cold murderer. One thought filled his mind; he saw the workings of a divine hand in all that had happened. The carriage rolled rapidly. Villefort, while turning restlessly on the cushions, felt something press against him. He put out his hand to remove the object; it was a fan which Madame de Villefort had left in the carriage; this fan awakened a recollection which darted through his mind like lightning. He thought of his wife.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, as though a red-hot iron were piercing his heart. During the last hour his own crime had alone been presented to his mind; now another object, not less terrible, suddenly presented itself.

His wife! he had just acted the inexorable judge with her, he had condemned her to death; and she, crushed by remorse, struck with terror, covered with the shame inspired by the eloquence of *his* irreproachable virtue — she, a poor weak woman, without help or the power of defending herself against his absolute and supreme will — she might at that very moment, perhaps, be preparing to die! An hour had elapsed since her condemnation; at that moment, doubtless, she was recalling all her crimes to her memory; she was asking pardon for her sins; perhaps she was even writing a letter imploring forgiveness from her virtuous husband — a forgiveness she was purchasing with her death. Villefort again groaned with anguish and despair.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "that woman became criminal only from associating with me! I carried the infection of crime with me, and she has caught it as she would the typhus fever, the cholera, the plague! And yet, I have punished her — I have dared to tell her — *I* have said, 'Repent and die!' But no! she must not die, she shall live and follow me. We will flee from Paris, and go far as the earth reaches. I told her of the scaffold. Oh, heavens! I forgot that it awaits me also! How could I pronounce that word! Yes, we will fly. I will confess

all to her: I will tell her daily that I also have committed a crime. Oh! what an alliance of the tiger and the serpent! — worthy wife of such as I am. She *must* live, that my infamy may diminish hers.” And Villefort dashed open the window in front of the carriage. “Faster, faster!” he cried, in a tone which electrified the coachman.

The horses, impelled by fear, flew towards the house.

“Yes, yes!” repeated Villefort, as he approached his home — “yes, that woman must live, she must repent, and educate my son, the sole survivor, with the exception of the indestructible old man, of the wreck of my house. She loves him; it was for his sake she has committed these crimes. We ought never to despair of softening the heart of a mother who loves her child; she will repent; no one will know she has been guilty; the crimes which have taken place in my house, though they now occupy the public mind, will be forgotten in time; or if, indeed, a few enemies should persist in remembering them, why, then, I will add them to my guilty list. What will it signify if one, two, or three more are added? My wife and child shall escape from this gulf, carrying treasures with them; she will live, and may yet be happy, since her child, in whom all her love is centred, will be with her. I shall have performed a good action, and my heart will be lighter.” And the procureur du roi breathed more freely than he had done for some time.

The carriage stopped at the door of the hotel. Villefort leaped out of the carriage; he saw his servants were surprised at his early return; he could read no other expression on their features. Neither of them spoke to him; they merely stood aside to let him pass by, as usual — nothing more. As he passed by M. Noirtier’s room, he perceived, through the half-open door, two figures; but he experienced no curiosity to know who was visiting his father; anxiety carried him on further.

“Come,” he said, as he ascended the stairs leading to his wife’s room, “nothing is changed here.”

He then closed the door of the landing.

"No one must disturb us," he said; "I must speak freely to her, accuse myself, and say—" he approached the door, touched the crystal handle, which yielded to his hand. "Not locked!" he cried; "that is well." And he entered the little room in which Edward slept; for though the child went to school during the day, his mother could not allow him to be separated from her at night. With a single glance Villefort's eye ran through the room.

"Not here!" he said; "doubtless she is in her bedroom."

He rushed towards the door; it was bolted; he stopped, shuddering. "Heloise!" he cried. He fancied he heard the sound of a piece of furniture being removed. "Heloise!" he repeated.

"Who is there?" answered the voice of her he sought.

He thought that voice more feeble than usual.

"Open the door!" cried Villefort; "open—it is I."

But notwithstanding this request, notwithstanding the tone of anguish in which it was uttered, the door remained closed. Villefort burst it open with a violent blow.

At the entrance of the room which led to her boudoir, Madame de Villefort was standing erect, pale, her features contracted, and her eyes glaring horribly.

"Heloise! Heloise!" he said, "what is the matter? Speak!"

The young woman extended her stiff white hand towards him.

"It is done, sir," she said, with a rattling which seemed to tear her throat. "What more do you want?" and she fell on the floor.

Villefort ran to her and seized her hand, which convulsively clasped a crystal bottle with a golden stopper. Madame de Villefort was dead.

Villefort, maddened with horror, stepped back to the threshold of the door. Fixing his eyes on the corpse, "My son!" he exclaimed, suddenly. "Where is my son?"

Edward, Edward!" and he rushed out of the room, still crying, "Edward, Edward!" The name was pronounced in such a tone of anguish that the servants ran up.

"Where is my son?" asked Villefort; "let him be removed from the house, that he may not see——"

"Master Edward is not downstairs, sir," replied the valet de chambre.

"Then he must be playing in the garden; go and see."

"No, sir; Madame de Villefort sent for him half an hour ago; he went into her room, and has not been downstairs since."

A cold perspiration burst on Villefort's brow; his legs trembled, and his brain filled with a confused mass of ideas.

"In Madame de Villefort's room!" he murmured, and slowly returned, with one hand wiping his forehead, and with the other supporting himself against the wall. To enter the room, he must again see the body of his unhappy wife. To call Edward, he must reawaken the echo of that room which now appeared like a sepulchre; to speak seemed like violating the silence of the tomb. His tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth.

"Edward!" he stammered, "Edward!" The child did not answer. Where, then, could he be, if he had entered his mother's room and not since returned? He stepped forward. The corpse of Madame de Villefort was stretched across the doorway leading to the room in which Edward must be; those glaring eyes seemed to watch over the threshold, and the lips expressed a terrible and mysterious irony. Through the open door a portion of the boudoir was visible, containing an upright piano and a blue satin couch. Villefort stepped forward two or three paces, and beheld his child, lying, no doubt, asleep, on the sofa. The unhappy man uttered an exclamation of joy; a ray of light seemed to penetrate the abyss of despair and darkness. He had only to step over the corpse, enter the boudoir, take the child in his arms, and flee far, far away.

Villefort no longer presented a type of civilized man; he more resembled a tiger wounded to death, whose teeth were broken in his last agony. He no longer feared realities, but phantoms. He leaped over the corpse as though it had been a furnace. He took the child in his arms, pressed him, shook him, called him, but the child replied not. He pressed his burning lips to the cheeks, but they were icy cold and pale; he felt his stiffened limbs; he pressed his hand upon the heart, but it no longer beat; the child was dead. A folded paper fell from Edward's breast.

Villefort, thunderstruck, fell upon his knees; the child dropped from his arms, and rolled on the floor by the side of its mother. He picked up the paper, and recognizing his wife's writing, ran his eyes rapidly over its contents: they were as follows:

"You know that I was a good mother, since it was for my son's sake I became a criminal. A good mother cannot depart without her son."

Villefort could not believe his eyes—he could not believe his reason; he dragged himself towards the child's corpse, and examined it as a lioness contemplates its dead cub. Then a piercing cry escaped from his breast, and he cried, "Still the hand of God!" The two victims alarmed him. He could not bear the solitude only shared by two corpses. Until then he had been sustained by rage, by his strength of mind, by despair, by the supreme agony which led the Titans to scale the heavens and Ajax to defy the gods. He now rose, his head bent beneath the weight of grief, and shaking his damp, staring hair he, who had never felt compassion for any one, determined to seek his father that he might have some one to whom he could relate his misfortunes—some one by whose side he might weep. He descended the little stairs with which we are acquainted, and entered Noirtier's room.

The old man appeared to be listening as attentively as his infirmities would allow to the Abbé Busoni, who looked cold and calm, as usual.



Villefort, perceiving the abbé, passed his hand across his brow. He recollected the call he had made upon him after the dinner at Auteuil, and then the visit the abbé had himself paid to his house on the day of Valentine's death.

"You here, sir?" he exclaimed; "do you, then, never appear but to act as an escort to death?"

Busoni turned around, and perceiving the excitement depicted on the magistrate's face, the savage lustre of his eyes, he understood that the scene of the assizes had been accomplished; but beyond this he was ignorant.

"I came to pray over the body of your daughter," he said.

"And, now, why are you here?"

"I came to tell you that you have sufficiently repaid your debt, and that from this moment I will pray God to forgive you, as I do."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Villefort, stepping back fearfully; "surely that is not the voice of the Abbé Busoni!"

"No!" The abbé threw off his false tonsure, shook his head, and his hair, no longer confined, fell in black masses around his manly face.

"It is the face of the Count of Monte-Cristo!" exclaimed the procureur du roi with a haggard expression.

"You are not exactly right, M. le procureur du roi; you must go further back."

"That voice! that voice! Where did I first hear it?"

"You heard it for the first time at Marseilles, twenty-three years ago, the day of your marriage with Mademoiselle de Saint-Meran. Refer to your papers."

"You are not Busoni? You are not Monte-Cristo? Oh, heavens! you are, then, some concealed, implacable and mortal enemy! I must have wronged you in some way at Marseilles. Oh, woe to me!"

"Yes, you are, indeed, right," said the count, crossing his arms over his broad chest: "search, search!"

"But what have I done to you?" exclaimed Villefort,

whose mind was balancing between reason and insanity, in that cloud which is neither a dream nor reality. "What have I done to you? Tell me, then! Speak!"

"You condemned me to a horrible, tedious death; you killed my father; you deprived me of liberty, love, and happiness."

"Who are you, then? Who are you?"

"I am the spectre of a wretch you buried in the dungeons of the Château d'If. The form of the Count of Monte-Cristo was given to that spectre, when he at length issued from his tomb, enriched with gold and diamonds, to reconduct him to you!"

"Ah! I recognize you! I recognize you!" exclaimed the procureur du roi. "You are——"

"I am Edmond Dantes!"

"You are Edmond Dantes!" cried Villefort, seizing the count by the wrist; "then come here!" and he dragged Monte-Cristo up the stairs, who, ignorant of what had happened, followed him in astonishment, presaging some new catastrophe. "Hold, Edmond Dantes!" he said, pointing to the bodies of his wife and child. "See! are you well revenged?"

Monte-Cristo became pale at this horrible sight. He felt he had passed beyond the bounds of vengeance, and that he could no longer say, "God is for and with me." With an expression of indescribable anguish, he threw himself upon the body of the child, reopened its eyes, felt its pulse, and then rushed with him into Valentine's room, of which he double-locked the door.

"My child!" cried Villefort. "He carries away the body of my child! Oh! curses, woe, death to you!" and he tried to follow Monte-Cristo; but, as though in a dream, he was transfixed to the spot; his eyes glared as though they were starting through the sockets; he griped the flesh on his chest until his nails were stained with blood; the veins of his temples swelled and boiled as though they would burst their narrow boundary and deluge his brain

with living fire. This lasted several minutes, until the frightful overturn of reason was accomplished; then, uttering a loud cry, followed by a burst of laughter, he rushed down the stairs.

A quarter of an hour afterwards, the door of Valentine's room opened, and Monte-Cristo reappeared. Pale, with a dull eye and heavy heart, all the noble features of that face, usually so calm and serene, appeared overwhelmed by grief. In his arms he held the child, whom no skill had been able to recall to life. Bending on one knee, he placed it reverently by the side of its mother, with its head upon her breast. Then, rising, he went out, and meeting a servant on the stairs, he asked:

"Where is M. de Villefort?"

The servant, instead of answering, pointed to the garden. Monte-Cristo ran down the steps, and, advancing towards the spot designated, beheld Villefort, encircled by his servants, with a spade in his hand, and digging the earth with fury.

"It is not here!" he cried. "It is not here!" and then he moved further on, and recommenced digging.

Monte-Cristo approached him, and said, in a low voice, with an expression almost humble:

"Sir, you have indeed lost a son; but ——"

Villefort interrupted him; he had neither listened nor heard.

"Oh, I *will* find it!" he cried. "You may pretend he is not here, but I *will* find him, though I dig forever."

Monte-Cristo drew back in horror.

"Oh!" he said, "he is mad!" And as though he feared that the walls of the accursed house would crumble around him, he rushed into the street, for the first time doubting whether he had the right to do as he had done.

"Oh! enough of this — enough of this," he cried; "let me save the last!"

On entering his house he met Morrel, who wandered about like a ghost.

"Prepare yourself, Maximilian," he said, with a smile; "we leave Paris to-morrow."

"Have you nothing more to do there?" asked Morrel.

"No," replied Monte-Cristo; "God grant I may not have done too much already."

The next day they indeed left, accompanied alone by Baptistin. Haydee had taken away Ali, and Bertuccio remained with Noirtier.

## CHAPTER CXII.

## THE DEPARTURE.

THE recent events formed the theme of conversation throughout all Paris. Emmanuel and his wife conversed with natural astonishment, in their little apartment in the Rue Meslay, upon the three successive, sudden and most unexpected catastrophes of Morcerf, Danglars, and Villefort. Maximilian, who was paying them a visit, listened to their conversation, or rather was present at it, plunged in his accustomed state of apathy.

"Indeed," said Julie, "might we not almost fancy, Emmanuel, that those people, so rich, so happy but yesterday, had forgotten, in their prosperity, that an evil genius hovered over them, who, like the wicked fairies in Perrault's stories, presenting themselves unbidden at some wedding or baptism, has appeared all at once to revenge himself for their fatal neglect?"

"What a dire misfortune!" said Emmanuel, thinking of Morcerf and Danglars.

"What dreadful sufferings!" said Julie, remembering Valentine, but whom with a natural delicacy she did not name before her brother.

"If the Supreme Being has directed the fatal blow," said Emmanuel, "it must be that he in his great goodness has perceived nothing in the past lives of these people to merit mitigation of their awful punishment."

"Do you not form a very rash judgment, Emmanuel?" asked Julie. "When my father, with a pistol in his hand, was once on the point of committing suicide, had any one

then said, 'This man deserves his misery,' would not that person have been deceived?"

"Yes; but your father was not allowed to fall; a being was commissioned to arrest the fatal hand of death about to descend on him."

Emmanuel had scarcely uttered these words when the sound of the bell was heard, the well-known signal given by the porter that a visitor had arrived. Nearly at the same instant, the door of the room was opened, and the Count of Monte-Cristo appeared on the threshold. The young people uttered a cry of joy, while Maximilian raised his head, and let it fall again immediately.

"Maximilian," said the count, without appearing to notice the different impressions which his presence produced on the little circle, "I come to seek you."

"To seek me?" repeated Morrel, as if awakening from a dream.

"Yes," said Monte-Cristo; "has it not been agreed that I should take you with me, and did I not tell you yesterday to prepare for departure?"

"I am ready," said Maximilian; "I came expressly to wish them farewell."

"Whither are you going, count?" asked Julie.

"In the first instance to Marseilles, madame."

"To Marseilles!" exclaimed the young couple.

"Yes, and I take your brother with me."

"Oh! count," said Julie, "will you restore him to us cured of his melancholy?"

Morrel turned away to conceal the confusion of his countenance.

"You perceive, then, that he is not happy?" said the count.

"Yes," replied the young woman; "and I fear much that he finds our home but a dull one."

"I will undertake to divert him," replied the count.

"I am ready to accompany you, sir," said Maximilian. "Adieu, my kind friends! Emmanuel, Julie, farewell!"

"How, farewell!" exclaimed Julie. "Do you leave us thus, so suddenly, without any preparations for your journey, without even a passport?"

"Needless delays but increase the grief of parting," said Monte-Cristo, "and Maximilian has doubtless provided himself with everything requisite; at least I advised him to do so."

"I have a passport, and my clothes are ready packed," said Morrel, in his tranquil but mournful manner.

"Good!" said Monte-Cristo, smiling. "In these prompt arrangements we recognize the order of a well-disciplined soldier."

"And you quit us thus," said Julie, "at a moment's warning? You do not give us a day — no, not even an hour, before your departure?"

"My carriage is at the door, and I must be in Rome in five days."

"But does Maximilian go to Rome?" exclaimed Emmanuel.

"I am going wherever it may please the count to lead me," said Morrel, with a smile full of grief. "I am devoted to him for the next month."

"Oh, heavens! how strangely he expresses himself, count!" said Julie.

"Maximilian accompanies *me*," said the count, in his kindest and most persuasive manner; "therefore, do not make yourself uneasy on your brother's account."

"Once more farewell, my dear sister! Emmanuel, adieu!" Morrel repeated.

"His carelessness and indifference touch me to the heart," said Julie. "Oh! Maximilian, Maximilian, you are certainly concealing something from us."

"Pshaw!" said Monte-Cristo. "You will see him return to you gay, smiling, and joyful."

Maximilian cast a look of disdain, almost of anger, on the count.

"We must leave you," said Monte-Cristo.

"Before you quit us, count," said Julie, "will you permit us to express to you all that the other day ——"

"Madame," interrupted the count, taking her two hands in his, "all that you could say in words would never express that which I read in your eyes; the thoughts of your heart are fully understood by mine. Like benefactors in romances, I should have left you without seeing you again; but that would have been a virtue beyond my strength, because I am a weak and vain man, fond of the tender, kind, and thankful glances of my fellow-creatures. On the eve of departure, I carry my egotism so far as to say, 'Do not forget me, my kind friends, for probably you will never see me again.'"

"Never see you again!" exclaimed Emmanuel, while two large tears rolled down Julie's cheeks. "Never behold you again! It is not a man, then, but some angel that leaves us, and this angel is on the point of returning to heaven after having appeared on earth to do good."

"Say not so," quickly returned Monte-Cristo, "say not so, my friends; angels never err, celestial beings remain where they wish to be; fate is not more powerful than they; it is they who, on the contrary, overcome fate. No! Emmanuel, I am but a man, and your admiration is as unmerited as your words are sacrilegious."

And pressing his lips on the hand of Julie, who rushed into his arms, he extended his other hand to Emmanuel; then tearing himself from this house, the abode of peace and happiness, he made a sign to Maximilian, who followed him passively, with the indifference which was perceptible in him ever since the death of Valentine had so stunned him.

"Restore my brother to peace and happiness," whispered Julie to Monte-Cristo.

And the count pressed her hand in reply, as he had done eleven years before on the staircase leading to Morrel's study.

"You still confide, then, in Sinbad the Sailor?" asked he, smiling



"Oh! yes," was the ready answer.

"Well, then, sleep in peace, and put your trust in the Lord."

As we have before said, the post-chaise was waiting; four powerful horses were already pawing the ground with impatience, while at the foot of the steps, Ali, his face bathed in perspiration, and apparently just arrived from a long walk, was standing.

"Well," asked the count in Arabic, "have you been to the old man's?"

Ali made a sign in the affirmative.

"And you placed the letter before him, as I ordered you to do?"

The slave respectfully signallized that he had.

"And what did he say, or rather do?"

Ali placed himself in the light, so that his master might see him distinctly, and then imitating in his intelligent manner the countenance of the old man, he closed his eyes as Noirtier was in the custom of doing when saying "Yes."

"Good! he accepts," said Monte-Cristo. "Now let us go."

The words had scarcely escaped him when the carriage was on its road, and the feet of the horses struck a shower of sparks from the pavement. Maximilian settled himself in his corner without uttering a word. Half an hour had fled, when the carriage stopped suddenly; the count had just pulled the silken check-string which was fastened to Ali's finger. The Nubian immediately descended and opened the carriage-door. It was a lovely starlight night—they had just reached the top of the hill of Villejuif, the platform from whence Paris, like some dark sea, is seen to agitate its millions of lights, resembling phosphoric waves—waves, indeed, more noisy, more passionate, more changeable, more furious, more greedy, than those of the tempestuous ocean—waves which never lie calm, like those of the vast sea—waves ever destructive, ever foaming, and ever restless.

The count remained alone, and, on a sign from his hand, the carriage advanced some steps. He contemplated for some time, with his arms crossed, the vast city. When he had fixed his piercing look on this modern Babylon, which equally engages the contemplation of the religious enthusiast, the materialist, and the scoffer:

“Great city!” murmured he, inclining his head and joining his hands as if in prayer; “less than six months have elapsed since first I entered thy gates. I believe that the spirit of God led my steps to thee, and that he also enables me to quit thee in triumph; the secret cause of my presence within thy walls I have confided alone to him who only has had the power to read my heart. God only knows that I retire from thee without pride or hatred, but not without many regrets; he only knows that the power confided to me has never been made subservient to my personal good or to any useless cause. Oh, great city! it is in thy palpitating bosom that I have found that which I sought; like a patient miner, I have dug deep into thy very entrails to root out evil thence; now my work is accomplished, my mission is terminated, now thou canst neither afford me pain nor pleasure. Adieu, Paris! adieu!”

His look wandered over the vast plain like that of some genius of the night; he passed his hand over his brow, and, getting into the carriage, the door was closed on him, and it quickly disappeared on the other side of the hill in a cloud of dust and noise.

## CHAPTER CXIII.

## THE HOUSE IN THE ALLÉES DE MEILLAN.

TEN leagues were passed without a single word being pronounced. Morrel was dreaming, and Monte-Cristo was looking at the dreamer.

"Morrel," said the count to him at length, "do you repent having followed me?"

"No, count; but to leave Paris ——"

"If I thought happiness might await you in Paris, Morrel, I would have left you there."

"Valentine reposes within the walls of Paris, and to leave Paris is like losing her a second time."

"Maximilian," said the count, "the friends that we have lost do not repose in the bosom of the earth, but are buried deep in our hearts; and it has been thus ordained, that we may always be accompanied by them. I have two friends, who in this way never depart from me—the one who gave me being, and the other who conferred knowledge and intelligence on me. Their spirits live in me. I consult them when doubtful, and if ever I do any good, it is to their good counsels that I am indebted. Listen to the voice of your heart, Morrel, and ask it whether you ought to preserve this melancholy exterior towards me."

"My friend," said Maximilian, "the voice of my heart is very sorrowful, and points out the future in most unhappy colors."

"It is ever thus that weakened minds see everything as through a black veil; the soul forms its own horizons:

your soul is darkened, and consequently the sky of the future appears stormy and unpromising."

"That may possibly be true," said Maximilian; and he again subsided into his thoughtful mood.

The journey was performed with that marvellous rapidity which the unlimited power of the count ever commanded; towns fled from them like the shadows on their path, and trees, shaken by the first winds of autumn, seemed like giants madly rushing on to meet them, and retreating as rapidly when once reached. The following morning they arrived at Chalons, where the count's steamboat was waiting for them. Without an instant being lost, the carriage was placed on board, and the two travellers embarked without delay. The boat was built for speed; her two paddle-wheels resembled two wings, with which she skimmed the water like a bird. Morrel was not insensible to that sensation of delight which is generally experienced in passing rapidly through the air, and the wind, which occasionally raised the hair from his forehead, seemed on the point of dispelling momentarily the clouds collected there. As the distance increased between the travellers and Paris an almost superhuman serenity appeared to surround the count; he might have been taken for an exile about to revisit his native land.

Ere long Marseilles presented herself to view. Marseilles, full of life and energy — Marseilles, the younger sister of Tyre and Carthage, that has succeeded to them in the empire of the Mediterranean — Marseilles, that with age increases in vigor and strength — Marseilles was seen. Powerful memories were stirred within them by the sight of that round tower, that Fort Saint-Nicolas, that port with its quays of brick, where they had both gambolled as children; and it was with one accord that they stopped on the Canebiere. A vessel was setting sail for Algiers, on board of which the bustle usually attending departure prevailed. The passengers and their relations crowded on the deck, friends taking a tender, but sorrowful, leave of each

other, some weeping, others noisy in their grief, formed a spectacle exciting even to those who witnessed similar ones daily, but which had not the power to disturb the current of thought that had taken possession of the mind of Maximilian from the moment he had set foot on the broad pavement of the quay.

"Here," said he, leaning heavily on the arm of Monte-Cristo, "here is the spot where my father stopped when the 'Pharaoh' entered the port; it was here that the good old man whom you saved from death and dishonor threw himself into my arms. I yet feel his warm tears on my face; and his were not the only tears shed, for many who witnessed our meeting wept also."

Monte-Cristo gently smiled, and said: "I was there," at the same time pointing to the corner of a street. As he spoke and in the very same direction he indicated, a groan, expressive of bitter grief, was heard; and a woman was seen waving her hand to a passenger on board the vessel about to sail. Monte-Cristo looked at her with an emotion that must have been remarked by Morrel had not his eyes been fixed on the vessel.

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Morrel, "I do not deceive myself — that young man who is waving his hat, that youth in the uniform of a lieutenant, is Albert de Morcerf!"

"Yes," said Monte-Cristo, "I recognized him."

"How so? — you were looking the other way."

The count smiled, as he was in the habit of doing when he did not wish to make any reply, and again turned his looks towards the veiled female, who soon disappeared at the corner of the street. Turning to his friend, "Dear Maximilian," said the count, "have you nothing to do in this land?"

"I have to weep over the grave of my father," replied Morrel, in a broken voice.

"Well, then, go, — wait for me there, and I will soon join you."

"You leave me, then?"

"Yes; I, also, have a pious visit to pay."

Morrel allowed his hand to fall into that which the count extended to him, then, with an inexpressibly melancholy inclination of the head, he quitted the count, and bent his steps to the east of the city. Monte-Cristo remained on the same spot until Maximilian was out of sight; he then walked slowly towards the Allées de Meillan, to seek out a small house with which our readers must have been familiar at the commencement of this story. It yet stood under the shade of the fine avenue of lime-trees which forms one of the most frequented walks of the idlers of Marseilles, covered by an immense vine, which spread its aged and blackened branches over the stone front, burned yellow by the ardent sun of the south. Two stone steps, worn away by the friction of the feet, led to the door, made of three planks, which, owing to their never having made acquaintance with paint or varnish, parted annually, to reunite again when the damp season arrived. This house, with all its crumbling antiquity and apparent misery, was yet cheerful and picturesque, and was the same that old Dantes formerly inhabited — the only difference being that the old man occupied merely the garret, while the whole house was now placed at the command of Mercedes by the count.

The female whom the count had seen leave the ship with so much regret entered this house; she had scarcely closed the door after her when Monte-Cristo appeared at the corner of a street, so that he found her and lost her again almost at the same instant. The worn-out steps were old acquaintances of his; he knew better than any one else how to open that weather-beaten door with a large-headed nail, which served to raise the latch within. He entered without knocking, or giving any other intimation of his presence, as if he had been the friend or the master of the place. At the end of a passage paved with bricks was seen a little garden, bathed in sunshine and

rich in warmth and light; it was in this garden that Mercedes found, in the place indicated by the count, the sum of money which he, through a sense of delicacy, intimated had been placed there four-and-twenty years previously. The trees of the garden were easily seen from the steps of the street door. Monte-Cristo, on stepping into the house, heard a sigh almost resembling a deep sob; he looked in the direction whence it came, and there, under an arbor of Virginian jasmine, with its thick foliage and beautiful long purple flowers, he perceived Mercedes seated, with her head bowed and weeping bitterly. She had raised her veil, and with her face hidden by her hands, was giving free scope to those sighs and tears which had been so long restrained by the presence of her son. Monte-Cristo advanced a few paces, which were heard on the gravel. Mercedes raised her head, and uttered a cry of terror on beholding a man before her.

"Madame," said the count, "it is no longer in my power to restore you to happiness, but I offer you consolation; will you deign to accept it as coming from a friend?"

"I am indeed most wretched," replied Mercedes, "alone in the world; I had but my son and he has left me!"

"He possesses a noble heart, madame," replied the count, "and he has acted rightly. He feels that every man owes a tribute to his country; some contribute their talents, others their industry; those devote their blood, these their nightly labors, to the same cause. Had he remained with you, his life must have become a hateful burden, nor would he have participated in your griefs. He will increase in strength and honor by struggling with adversity, which he will convert into prosperity. Leave him to build up the future for you, and I venture to say, you will confide it to safe hands."

"Oh!" replied the wretched woman, mournfully shaking her head, "the prosperity of which you speak, and

which from the bottom of my heart I pray God in his mercy to grant him, I can never enjoy. The bitter cup of adversity has been drained by me to the very dregs, and I feel that the grave is not far distant. You have acted kindly, count, in bringing me back to the place where I have enjoyed so much bliss. I ought to meet death on the same spot where happiness was once all my own."

"Alas!" said Monte-Cristo, "your words sear and embitter my heart, the more so as you have every reason to hate me; I have been the cause of all your misfortunes; but why do you pity, instead of blame me? You render me still more unhappy ——"

"Hate you — blame you — *you*, Edmond! Hate — reproach the man that has spared my son's life! For was it not your fatal and sanguinary intention to destroy that son of whom M. de Morcerf was so proud? Oh! look at me well, and discover, if you can, even the semblance of a reproach in me."

The count looked up, and fixed his eyes on Mercedes, who, partly rising from her seat, extended both her hands towards him.

"Oh! look at me," continued she, with a feeling of profound melancholy; "my eyes no longer dazzle by their brilliancy, for the time has long fled since I used to smile on Edmond Dantes, who anxiously looked out for me from the window of yonder garret, then inhabited by his old father. Years of grief have created an abyss between those days and the present. I neither reproach you nor hate you, my friend! Oh! no, Edmond! it is myself that I blame — myself that I hate! Oh! miserable creature that I am!" cried she, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes to heaven. "I once possessed piety, innocence, and love — the three ingredients of the happiness of angels — and now what am I?"

Monte-Cristo approached her, and silently took her hand.



"No," said she, withdrawing it gently — "no, my friend, touch me not. You have spared me, yet of all those who have fallen under your vengeance I was the most guilty. They were influenced by hatred, by avarice, and by self-love; but I was base, and for want of courage, acted against my judgment. Nay, do not press my hand, Edmond! You are thinking of some kind expression, I am sure, to console me, but do not bestow it on me, for I am no longer worthy of kindness. See" (and she exposed her face completely to view), "see, misfortune has silvered my hair; my eyes have shed so many tears that they are encircled by a rim of purple; and my brow is wrinkled. You, Edmond, on the contrary — you are still young, handsome, dignified; it is because you have never doubted the mercy of God, and He has supported and strengthened you in all your trials."

As Mercedes spoke, the tears chased each other down her wan cheeks: the unhappy woman's heart was breaking, as memory recalled the changeful events of her life. Monte-Cristo, however, took her hand, and imprinted a kiss on it, but she herself felt that it was with no greater warmth than he would have respectfully bestowed on the hand of some marble statue of a saint.

"It often happens," continued she, "that a first fault destroys the prospects of a whole life. I believed you dead; why did I survive you? What good has it done me to mourn for you eternally in the secret recesses of my heart? Only to make a woman of nine and thirty look like one of fifty years of age. Why, having recognized you, and I the only one to do so, why was I able to save my son alone? Ought I not also to have rescued the man that I had accepted for a husband, guilty though he were? Yet I let him die; what do I say? Oh, merciful Heaven! was I not accessory to his death by my supine insensibility, by my contempt for him, not remembering, or not willing to remember, that it was for my sake he had become a traitor and a perjurer? In what

am I benefited by accompanying my son so far, since I now abandon him and allow him to depart alone to the baneful climate of Africa? Oh, I have been base, cowardly, I tell you; I have abjured my affections, and, like all renegades, I am of evil omen to those who surround me!"

"No, Mercedes," said Monte-Cristo — "no; you judge yourself with too much severity. You are a noble-minded woman, and it was your grief that disarmed me. Still, I was but an agent, led on by an invisible and offended Deity, who chose not to withhold the fatal blow that I was destined to hurl. I take that God to witness, at whose feet I have prostrated myself daily for the last ten years, that I would have sacrificed my life to you, and, with my life, the projects that were indissolubly linked with it. But — I say it with some pride, Mercedes — God required me, and I lived. Examine the past and the present, endeavor to dive into futurity, and then say whether I am not a divine instrument. The most dreadful misfortunes, the most frightful sufferings, the abandonment of all those who loved me, the persecution of those who did not know me, formed the trials of my youth; when suddenly, from captivity, solitude, misery, I was restored to light and liberty, and became the possessor of a fortune so brilliant, so unbounded, so unheard-of, that I must have been blind not to be conscious that God had endowed me with it to work out His own great designs. From that time I viewed this fortune as confided to me for a particular purpose. Not a thought was given to a life which you once, Mercedes, had the power to render blissful — not one hour of peaceful calm was mine, but I felt myself driven on like an exterminating angel. Like those adventurous captains about to embark on some enterprise full of danger, I laid in my provisions, I loaded my arms, I collected every means of attack and defence; I inured my body to the most violent exercises, my soul to the bitterest trials; I taught my arm to slay, my eyes

to behold excruciating sufferings, and my mouth to smile at the most horrid spectacles. From being good-natured, confiding, and forgiving, I became revengeful, cunning, and wicked, or rather immovable as fate. Then I launched out into the path that was opened to me; I overcame every obstacle and reached the goal. But woe to those that met me in my career."

"Enough," said Mercedes — "enough, Edmond! Believe me that she who alone recognized you has been the only one to comprehend you. And had she crossed your path, and you had crushed her like a frail glass, still, Edmond, still she must have admired you! Like the gulf between me and the past, there is an abyss between you, Edmond, and the rest of mankind; and I tell you freely that the comparison I draw between you and other men will ever be one of my greatest tortures. No! there is nothing in the world to resemble you in worth and goodness! But we must say farewell, Edmond; and let us part."

"Before I leave you, Mercedes, have you no request to make?" said the count.

"I desire but one thing in this world, Edmond — the happiness of my son."

"Pray to the Almighty to spare his life, and I will take upon myself to promote his happiness."

"Thanks, thanks, Edmond!"

"But have you no request to make for yourself, Mercedes?"

"For myself I want nothing. I live, as it were, between two graves — the one that of Edmond Dantes — lost to me, long, long since. He had my love! That word ill becomes my faded lip now; but it is a memory dear to my heart, and one that I would not lose for all that the world contains. The other grave is that of the man who met his death from the hand of Edmond Dantes. I approve of the deed, but I must pray for the dead."

"Yes, your son shall be happy, Mercedes," repeated the count.

"Then I shall enjoy as much as this world can possibly confer."

"But what are your intentions?"

"To say that I shall live here like the Mercedes of other times, gaining my bread by labor, would not be true, nor would you believe me. I have no longer the strength to do anything but spend my days in prayer. However, I shall have no occasion to work, for the little sum of money buried by you, and which I found in the place you mentioned, will be sufficient to maintain me. Rumor will probably be busy respecting me, my occupations, my manner of living — that will signify but little!"

"Mercedes," said the count, "I do not say it to blame you, but you made an unnecessary sacrifice in relinquishing the whole of the fortune amassed by M. de Morcerf: half of it, at least, by right belonged to you, in virtue of your vigilance and economy."

"I perceive what you are intending to propose to me, but I cannot accept it, Edmond — my son would not permit it."

"Nothing shall be done without the full approbation of Albert de Morcerf. I will make myself acquainted with his intentions, and will submit to them. But if he be willing to accept my offers, will you oppose them?"

"You well know, Edmond, that I am no longer a reasoning creature. I have no will, unless it be the will never to decide. I have been so overwhelmed by the many storms that have broken over my head, that I am become passive in the hands of the Almighty, like a sparrow in the talons of an eagle. I live, because it is not ordained for me to die. If succor be sent to me, I will accept it."

"Ah, madame," said Monte-Cristo, "you should not talk thus! It is not so we should evince our resignation to the will of Heaven; on the contrary, we are all free agents."

"Alas!" exclaimed Mercedes, "if it were so, if I possessed free will, but without the power to render that will efficacious, it would drive me to despair."

Monte-Cristo dropped his head and shrank from the vehemence of her grief.

"Will you not even say you will see me again?" he asked.

"On the contrary, we shall meet again," said Mercedes, pointing to heaven with solemnity. "I tell you so to prove to you that I still hope." And after pressing her own trembling hand upon that of the count, Mercedes rushed up the stairs and disappeared.

Monte-Cristo slowly left the house and turned towards the quay. But Mercedes saw not his departure, though she was seated at the little window of the room which had been occupied by old Dantes. Her eyes were straining to see the ship which was carrying her son over the vast sea. But still her voice involuntarily murmured softly — "Edmond! Edmond! Edmond!"

## CHAPTER CXIV.

## THE PAST.

THE count departed with a sad heart from the house in which he had left Mercedes, probably never to behold her again.

Since the death of little Edward, a great change had taken place in Monte-Cristo. Having reached the summit of his vengeance by a long and tortuous path, he saw an abyss of doubt on the other side of the mountain. More than this, the conversation which had just taken place between Mercedes and himself had awakened so many recollections in his heart that he felt it necessary to combat with them.

A man of the count's temperament could not long indulge in that melancholy which can exist in common minds, but which destroys superior ones. He thought that he must have made an error in his calculations if he now found cause to blame himself.

"I cannot have deceived myself," he said; "I must look upon the past in a false light. What!" he continued, "can I have been tracing a false path? — can the end which I proposed be a mistaken end? — can one hour have sufficed to prove to an architect that the work upon which he founded all his hopes was an impossible if not a sacrilegious undertaking? I cannot reconcile myself to this idea — it would madden me! The reason why I am not dissatisfied is that I have not a clear appreciation of the past. The past, like the country through which we walk, becomes indistinct as we advance. My position is

like that of a person wounded in a dream; he feels the wound, though he cannot recollect when he received it. Come, then, thou regenerate man, thou extravagant prodigal, thou awakened sleeper, thou all-powerful visionary, thou invincible millionaire! — once again review thy past life of starvation and wretchedness, revisit the scenes where fate and misfortune conducted, and where despair received thee; too many diamonds, too much gold and splendor, are now reflected by the mirror in which Monte-Cristo seeks to behold Dantes. Hide thy diamonds, bury thy gold, shroud thy splendor, exchange riches for poverty, liberty for a prison, a living body for a corpse.”

As he thus reasoned, Monte-Cristo walked down the Rue de la Caisserie. It was the same through which, twenty-four years before, he had been conducted by a silent and nocturnal guard; the houses, to-day so smiling and animated, were on that night dark, mute, and closed.

“And yet they were the same,” murmured Monte-Cristo, “only now it is broad daylight instead of night; it is the sun which brightens the place, and makes it appear so cheerful.”

He proceeded towards the quay by the Rue Saint-Laurent, and advanced to the Consigne; it was the point where he had embarked. A pleasure-boat was passing, with its striped awning; Monte-Cristo called the owner, who immediately rowed up to him, with the eagerness of a boatman hoping for a good fare.

The weather was magnificent, and the excursion a treat. The sun, red and flaming, was sinking into the water, which embraced it as it approached. The sea, smooth as crystal, was now and then disturbed by the leaping of fish, which, pursued by some unseen enemy, sought for safety in another element; while on the extreme verge of the horizon might be seen the fishermen’s boats, white and graceful as the sea-gull, or the merchant vessels bound for Corsica or Spain.

But, notwithstanding that serene sky, those graceful boats, and the golden light in which the whole scene was bathed, the Count of Monte-Cristo, wrapped in his cloak, could think only of his terrible voyage, the details of which were, one by one, recalled to his memory. The solitary light burning at the Catalans; the first sight of the Château d'If, which told him whither they were leading him; the struggle with the gendarmes when he wished to throw himself overboard; his despair when he found himself vanquished, and the cold sensation of the end of the carbine touching his forehead — all were brought before him in vivid and frightful reality. Like those streams which the heat of the summer has dried up, and which, after the autumnal storms, gradually begin oozing drop by drop, so did the count feel his heart gradually fill with the gall which formerly nearly overwhelmed that of Edmond Dantes. Henceforth he no longer beheld the clear sky, the graceful barks, the ardent light; the sky appeared hung in black, and the gigantic structure of the Château d'If seemed like the phantom of a mortal enemy. As they reached the shore, the count instinctively shrank to the extreme end of the boat, and the owner was obliged to call out in his sweetest tone of voice:

“Sir, we have reached the shore.”

Monte-Cristo remembered that on that very spot, on the same rock, he had been violently dragged by the guards, who forced him to ascend the slope at the points of their bayonets. The journey had seemed very long to Dantes, but Monte-Cristo found it equally short. Each stroke of the oar seemed to reawaken a new crowd of ideas, which sprang up with the froth of the sea.

There had been no prisoners confined in the Château d'If since the revolution of July; it was only inhabited by a guard, placed for the prevention of smuggling. A concierge waited at the door to exhibit this monument of curiosity to visitors, once a scene of terror.



The count inquired whether any of the ancient jailers were still there, but they had all been pensioned, or had passed on to some other employment. The concierge who conducted him had only been there since 1830.

He visited his own dungeon. He again beheld the dull light vainly endeavoring to penetrate the narrow opening. His eyes rested upon the spot where his bed, since then removed, had stood, and there the new stones indicated where the breach made by the Abbé Faria had been.

Monte-Cristo felt his limbs tremble; he seated himself upon a log of wood.

"Are there any stories connected with this prison besides the one relating to the poisoning of Mirabeau?" asked the count. "Are there any traditions respecting these dismal abodes, in which it is difficult to believe men can ever have imprisoned their fellow-creatures?"

"Yes, sir; indeed, the jailer Antoine told me one connected with this very dungeon."

Monte-Cristo shuddered; Antoine had been his jailer. He had almost forgotten his name and face, but on hearing the former pronounced, memory recalled his person as he used to see it, his face encircled by a beard, wearing a brown jacket, with the bunch of keys, the jingling of which he still seemed to hear. The count turned around, and fancied he saw him in the corridor, rendered still darker by the torch carried by the concierge.

"Would you like to hear the story, sir?"

"Yes, relate it," said Monte-Cristo, pressing his hand to his heart to still its violent beatings: he felt afraid of hearing his own history.

"This dungeon," said the concierge, "was, it appears, some time ago occupied by a very dangerous prisoner, the more so since he was full of industry. Another person was confined in the Château at the same time, but he was not wicked, he was only a poor mad priest."

"Ah! indeed! — mad!" repeated Monte-Cristo; "and what was his mania?"

"He offered millions to any one who would set him at liberty."

Monte-Cristo raised his eyes, but he could not see the heavens; there was a stone veil between him and the firmament. He thought that there had been no less thick a veil before the eyes of those to whom Faria offered the treasures.

"Could the prisoners see each other?" he asked.

"Oh, no, sir; it was expressly forbidden; but they succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the guards, and made a passage from one dungeon to the other."

"And which of them made this passage?"

"Oh, it must have been the young man, certainly, for he was strong and industrious, while the abbé was aged and weak; besides, his mind was too vacillating to allow him to carry out an idea."

"Lying fools," murmured the count.

"However, be that as it may, the young man made a passage, how or by what means no one knows; but he made it, and there is the trace yet remaining of the proof. Do you see it?" and the man held the torch to the wall.

"Ah! yes; truly," said the count, in a voice hoarse from emotion.

"The result was, the two men communicated together; how long they did so, nobody knows. One day the old man fell ill and died. Now, guess what the young one did?"

"Tell me."

"He carried off the corpse, which he placed on his own bed with its face to the wall; then he entered the empty dungeon, closed the entrance and slid himself into the sack which had contained the dead body. Did you ever hear of such an idea?"

Monte-Cristo closed his eyes, and seemed again to experience all the sensations he had felt when the coarse canvas, yet moist with the cold dews of death, had touched his face. The jailer continued:

"Now this was his project; he fancied they buried the dead at the Château d'If, and imagining they would not expend much labor on the grave of a prisoner, he calculated upon raising the earth with his shoulders; but, unfortunately, their arrangements at the Château frustrated his projects; they never buried their dead; they merely attached a heavy cannon-ball to the feet, and then threw them into the sea. This was what was done. The young man was thrown from the top of the rock; the corpse was found on the bed next day, and the whole truth was guessed: for the men who performed the office then mentioned what they had not dared to speak of before, namely, that at the moment the corpse was thrown into the deep, they heard a shriek, which was almost immediately stifled by the water in which it disappeared."

The count breathed with difficulty; the cold drops ran down his forehead, and his heart was full of anguish.

"No," he muttered, "the doubt I felt was but the commencement of forgetfulness; but here the wound reopens, and the heart again thirsts for vengeance. And the prisoner," he continued aloud, "was he ever heard of afterwards?"

"Oh, no; of course not! You can understand that one of two things must have happened; he must either have fallen flat, in which case the blow, from a height of ninety feet, must have killed him instantly, or he must have fallen upright, and then the weight would have dragged him to the bottom, where he remained — poor fellow!"

"Then you pity him?" said the count.

"*Ma foi*, yes; though he was in his own element."

"What do you mean?"

"A report ran that he had been a naval officer, who had been confined for plotting with the Bonapartists."

"Truth!" muttered the count, "thou art made to rise above the waves and flames! Thus the poor sailor lives in the recollection of those who narrate his history; his terrible story is recited in the chimney-corner, and a

shudder is felt at the description of his transit through the air to be swallowed by the deep." Then the count added aloud, "Was his name ever known?"

"Oh, yes; but only as No. 34."

"Oh, Villefort, Villefort," murmured the count, "this scene must often have haunted thy sleepless hours!"

"Do you wish to see anything more, sir?" said the concierge.

"Yes; especially if you will show me the poor abbé's room."

"Ah! No. 27."

"Yes; No. 27," repeated the count, who seemed to hear the voice of the abbé, answering him in those very words through the wall when asked his name.

"Come, sir."

"Wait," said Monte-Cristo; "I wish to take one final glance around this room."

"This is fortunate," said the guide; "I have forgotten the other key."

"Go and fetch it."

"I will leave you the torch, sir."

"No, take it away; I can see in the dark."

"Why, you are like No. 34. They said he was so accustomed to darkness he could see a pin in the darkest corner of his dungeon."

"He spent fourteen years to arrive at that," muttered the count.

The guide carried away the torch. The count had spoken correctly. Scarcely had a few seconds elapsed, ere he saw everything as distinctly as by daylight. Then he looked around him, and really recognized his dungeon.

"Yes," he said, "there is the stone upon which I used to sit, there is the impression made by my shoulders on the wall; there is the mark of my blood made when I one day dashed my head against the wall. Oh! those figures! how well I remember them! I made them one day to calculate the age of my father, that I might know whether

I should find him still living, and that of Mercedes, to know if I should find her still free. After finishing that calculation, I had a minute's hope. I did not reckon upon hunger and infidelity!" and a bitter laugh escaped from the count. He saw in fancy the burial of his father, and the marriage of Mercedes. On the other side of the dungeon, he perceived an inscription, the white letters of which were still visible on the green wall. "O God," he read, "preserve my memory." "Oh, yes," he cried, "that was my only prayer at last; I no longer begged for liberty, but memory; I dreaded to become mad and forgetful. O God! thou hast preserved my memory; I thank Thee! I thank Thee!"

At this moment the light of the torch was reflected on the wall; the guide was advancing; Monte-Cristo went to meet him.

"Follow me, sir;" and without ascending the stairs, the guide conducted him by a subterraneous passage to another entrance. There again Monte-Cristo was assailed by a crowd of thoughts. The first thing that met his eyes was the meridian, drawn by the abbé on the wall, by which he calculated the time; then he saw the remains of the bed on which the poor prisoner had died. The sight of this, instead of exciting the anguish experienced by the count in the dungeon, filled his heart with a soft and grateful sentiment, and tears fell from his eyes.

"This is where the mad abbé was kept, sir, and that is where the young man entered;" and the guide pointed to the opening which had remained unclosed. "From the appearance of the stone," he continued, "a learned gentleman discovered that the prisoners might have communicated together for ten years. Poor things! they must have been ten weary years."

Dantes took some louis from his pocket, and gave them to the man who had twice unconsciously pitied him. The guide took them, thinking them merely a few pieces of little value; but the light of the torch revealed their true worth.

"Sir," he said, "you have made a mistake; you have given me gold."

"I know it."

The concierge looked upon the count with surprise.

"Sir," he cried, scarcely able to believe his good fortune — "sir, I cannot understand your generosity!"

"Oh! it is very simple, my good fellow; I have been a sailor, and your story touched me more than it would others."

"Then, sir, since you are so liberal, I ought to offer you something."

"What have you to offer me, my friend? Shells? Straw-work? Thank you!"

"No, sir, neither of those: something connected with this story."

"Really! What is it?"

"Listen!" said the guide. "I said to myself, 'Something is always left in a cell inhabited by one prisoner for fifteen years;' so I began to sound the wall."

"Ah!" cried Monte-Cristo, remembering the two hiding-places of the abbé.

"After some search, I discovered a hollow sound against the head of the bed and under the hearth."

"Yes," said the count, "yes."

"I raised the stones, and found ——"

"A rope-ladder and some tools?"

"How do you know that?" asked the guide, in astonishment.

"I do not know — I only guess it, because these sort of things are generally found in prisoners' cells."

"Yes, sir, a rope-ladder and tools."

"And have you them yet?"

"No, sir; I sold them to visitors, who considered them great curiosities; but I have still something left."

"What is it?" asked the count, impatiently.

"A sort of book, written upon strips of cloth."

"Go and fetch it, my good fellow; if it be what I hope, rest satisfied."

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"I will run for it, sir;" and the guide went out.

Then the count knelt down by the side of the bed, which death had converted into an altar. "Oh, second father," he exclaimed, "thou who hast given me liberty, knowledge, riches; thou who, like beings of a superior order to ourselves, couldst understand the science of good and evil; if in the depths of the tomb there still remains something within us which can respond to the voice of those who are left on earth; if after death the soul ever revisits the places where we have lived and suffered, then, noble heart! sublime soul! then I conjure thee, by the paternal love thou didst bear me, by the filial obedience I vowed to thee, grant me some sign, some revelation! Remove from me the remains of a doubt, which, if it change not to conviction, must become remorse!" The count bowed his head, and clasped his hands together.

"Here, sir," said a voice behind him.

Monte-Cristo shuddered and rose. The concierge held out the strips of cloth upon which the Abbé Faria had spread the stores of his mind. The manuscript was the great work by the Abbé Faria upon the kingdoms of Italy. The count seized it hastily, and his eyes immediately fell upon the epigraph, and he read, "Thou shalt tear out the dragon's teeth, and shalt trample the lions under foot, saith the Lord."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "here is my answer. Thanks, father, thanks!" And feeling in his pocket, he took thence a small pocketbook, which contained ten bank-notes, each of 1,000 francs.

"Here," he said, "take this pocketbook."

"Do you give it to me?"

"Yes, but only on condition that you will not open it till I am gone;" and placing the treasure he had just found in his breast, which was more valuable to him than the richest jewel, he rushed out of the passage, and, reaching his boat, cried, "To Marseilles!" Then, as he departed, he fixed his eyes upon the gloomy prison.









"Woe," he cried, "to those who confined me in that wretched prison; and woe to those who forgot that I was there!"

As he repassed the Catalans, the count turned around, and, burying his head in his cloak, murmured the name of a woman.

The victory was complete; twice he had overcome his doubts. The name he pronounced, in a voice of tenderness, amounting almost to love, was that of Haydee.

On landing, the count turned towards the cemetery, where he felt sure of finding Morrel. He too, ten years ago, had piously sought out a tomb, and sought it in vain. He, who returned to France with millions, had been unable to find the grave of his father, who had perished from hunger. Morrel had, indeed, placed a cross over the spot, but it had fallen down, and the gravedigger had burned it, as he did all the old wood in the churchyard.

The worthy merchant had been more fortunate. Dying in the arms of his children, he had been by them laid by the side of his wife, who had preceded him in eternity by two years. Two large slabs of marble, on which were inscribed their names, were placed on either side of a little enclosure, railed in, and shaded by four cypress-trees.

Morrel was leaning against one of these, mechanically fixing his eyes on the graves. His grief was so profound, he was nearly unconscious.

"Maximilian," said the count, "you should not look on the graves, but there;" and he pointed upward.

"The dead are everywhere," said Morrel; "did you not yourself tell me so as we left Paris?"

"Maximilian," said the count, "you asked me during the journey to allow you to remain some days at Marseilles. Do you still wish to do so?"

"I have no wishes, count; only I fancy I could pass the time less painfully here than anywhere else."

"So much the better, for I must leave you, but I carry your word with me, do I not?"

"Ah, count, I shall not forget it."

"No, you will not forget it, because you are a man of honor, Morrel, because you have sworn, and are about to do so again."

"Oh, count, have pity upon me! I am very unhappy."

"I have known a man much more unfortunate than you, Morrel."

"Impossible!"

"Alas!" said Monte-Cristo, "it is the infirmity of our nature always to believe ourselves much more unhappy than those who groan by our side!"

"What can be more wretched than the man who has lost all he loved and desired in the world?"

"Listen, Morrel, and pay attention to what I am about to tell you. I knew a man who, like you, had fixed all his hopes of happiness upon a woman. He was young; he had an old father whom he loved, a betrothed bride whom he adored. He was about to marry her, when one of those caprices of fate — which would almost make us doubt the goodness of Providence, if that Providence did not afterwards reveal itself by proving that all is but a means of conducting to an end — one of those caprices deprived him of his mistress, of the future of which he had dreamed (for in his blindness he forgot he could only read the present), and plunged him into a dungeon."

"Ah!" said Morrel, "one quits a dungeon in a week, a month, or a year."

"He remained there fourteen years, Morrel," said the count, placing his hand on the young man's shoulder.

Maximilian shuddered.

"Fourteen years!" he muttered.

"Fourteen years," repeated the count. "During that time he had many moments of despair. He also, Morrel, like you, considered himself the unhappiest of men."

"Well?" asked Morrel.

"Well! at the height of his despair, God assisted him through human means; at first, perhaps, he did not rec-

ognize the infinite mercy of the Lord, but at last he took patience and waited. One day he miraculously left the prison, transformed, rich, powerful. His first cry was for his father, but that father was dead ! ”

“ My father, too, is dead,” said Morrel.

“ Yes; but your father died in your arms, happy, respected, rich, and full of years; his father died poor, despairing, almost doubtful of Providence; and when his son sought his grave, ten years afterwards, his tomb had disappeared, and no one could say, ‘ There sleeps the father you loved so well. ’ ”

“ Oh ! ” exclaimed Morrel.

“ He was, then, a more unhappy son than you, Morrel, for he could not even find his father’s grave ! ”

“ But then he had the woman he loved still remaining ? ”

“ You are deceived, Morrel; that woman —— ”

“ She was dead ? ”

“ Worse than that; she was faithless, and had married one of the persecutors of her betrothed. You see, then, Morrel, that he was a more unhappy lover than you. ”

“ And has he found consolation ? ”

“ He has found calmness, at least. ”

“ And does he ever expect to be happy ? ”

“ He hopes so, Maximilian. ”

The young man’s head fell on his breast.

“ You have my promise,” he said, after a minute’s pause, extending his hand to Monte-Cristo. “ Only remember —— ”

“ On the 5th of October, Morrel, I shall expect you at the island of Monte-Cristo. On the 4th a yacht will wait for you in the port of Bastia; it will be called the ‘ Eurus. ’ You will deliver your name to the captain, who will bring you to me. It is understood — is it not ? ”

“ But, count, do you remember that the 5th of October —— ”

“ Child ! ” replied the count, “ not to know the value of a man’s word ! I have told you twenty times that if you



wish to die on that day, I will assist you. Morrel, farewell ! ”

“Do you leave me ? ”

“Yes; I have business in Italy. I leave you alone with your misfortunes and with hope, Maximilian.”

“When do you leave ? ”

“Immediately; the steamer waits, and in an hour I shall be far from you. Will you accompany me to the harbor, Maximilian ? ”

“I am entirely yours, count.”

Morrel accompanied the count to the harbor; the white steam was ascending like a plume of feathers from the black chimney. The steamer soon disappeared, and in an hour afterwards, as the count had said, was scarcely distinguishable in the horizon amid the fogs of the night.

## CHAPTER CXV.

## PEPPINO.

AT the same time that the steamer disappeared behind Cape Morgion, a man travelling post on the road from Florence to Rome had just passed the little town of Aquapendente. He was travelling fast enough to make a great deal of ground without becoming altogether suspicious.

This man, dressed in a great-coat, or rather a surtout, a little the worse for the journey, but which exhibited the ribbon of the Legion d'Honneur still fresh and brilliant, — a decoration which also ornamented the under coat, — might be recognized, not only by these signs, but also from the accent with which he spoke to the postilions, to be a Frenchman. Another proof that he was a native of the universal country was apparent in the fact of his knowing no other Italian words than the terms used in music.

"*Allegro!*" he called out to the postilions at every ascent. "*Moderato!*" he cried as they descended. And any one who has ever travelled that road knows there are hills enough between Rome and Florence by the way of Aquapendente!

These two words greatly amused the men to whom they were addressed. On reaching La Storta, the point from whence Rome is first visible, the traveller evinced none of the enthusiastic curiosity which usually leads strangers to stand up and endeavor to catch sight of the dome of St. Peter's, which may be seen long before any other object is distinguishable. No, he merely drew a pocketbook from

his pocket, and took from it a paper folded in four, and after having examined it in a manner almost reverential, he said :

“Good! I have it still.”

The carriage entered by the Porto del Popolo, turned to the left, and stopped at the Hôtel d’Espagne. Maître Pastrini, our old acquaintance, received the traveller at the door, hat in hand. The traveller alighted, ordered a good dinner, and inquired the address of the house of Thomson & French, which was immediately given to him, as it was one of the most celebrated in Rome. It was situated in the Via del Banchi, near St. Peter’s.

In Rome, as everywhere else, the arrival of a post-chaise is an event. Ten young descendants of Marius and the Gracchi, barefooted and out at elbows, with one hand resting on the hip, and the other arm gracefully curved above the head, stared at the traveller, the post-chaise, and the horses; to these were added about fifty little vagabonds from the states of his holiness, who made a collection for plunging into the Tiber at high water from the bridge of St. Angelo.

Now, as these *gamins* of Rome, more fortunate than those of Paris, understand every language, more especially the French, they heard the traveller order an apartment, a dinner, and finally inquire the way to the house of Thomson & French. The result was that when the newcomer left the hotel with the cicerone, a man detached himself from the rest of the idlers, and, without having been seen by the traveller, and appearing to excite no attention from the guide, followed the stranger with as much skill as a Parisian agent of police would have used.

The Frenchman had been so impatient to reach the house of Thomson & French that he would not wait for the horses to be harnessed, but left word for the carriage to overtake him on the road, or to wait for him at the bankers’ door. He reached it before the carriage arrived.

The Frenchman entered, leaving his guide in the ante-

room, who immediately entered into conversation with two or three of those industrious idlers who are always to be found in Rome at the doors of banking-houses, churches, museums, or theatres. With the Frenchman the man who had followed him entered too; the Frenchman knocked at the inner door, and entered the first room; his shadow did the same.

"Messrs. Thomson & French?" inquired the stranger.

A kind of footman rose at a sign from a confidential clerk belonging to the first desk.

"Whom shall I announce?" said the footman.

"The Baron Danglars."

"Follow me!" said the man. A door opened, through which the footman and the baron disappeared.

The man who had followed Danglars sat down on a bench. The clerk continued to write for the next five minutes; the man also preserved profound silence, and remained perfectly motionless. Then the pen of the clerk ceased to move over the paper; he raised his head, and appearing to be perfectly sure of a *tête-à-tête*, said:

"Ah, ha! Here you are, Peppino!"

"Yes," was the laconic reply.

"You have found out that there is something worth having about this large gentleman!"

"There is no great merit due to me, for we were informed of it."

"You know his business here, then?"

"*Pardieu!* he has come to draw, but I don't know how much!"

"You will know presently, my friend."

"Very well, only do not give me false information, as you did the other day."

"What do you mean — of whom do you speak? Was it the Englishman who carried off 3,000 crowns from here the other day?"

"No; he really had 3,000 crowns, and we found them.

I mean the Russian prince, who you said had 30,000 livres, and we only found 22,000."

"You must have searched badly."

"Luigi Vampa himself searched."

"Indeed! But you must let me make my observations, or the Frenchman will transact his business without my knowing the sum."

Peppino nodded, and, taking a rosary from his pocket, began to mutter a few prayers, while the clerk disappeared through the same door by which Danglars and the footman had gone out. At the expiration of ten minutes the clerk returned, with a bright countenance.

"Well?" asked Peppino of his friend.

"Joy, joy! — the sum is large."

"Five or six millions, is it not?"

"Yes; you know the amount."

"On the receipt of the Count of Monte-Cristo?"

"Why, how came you to be so well acquainted with all this?"

"I told you we were informed beforehand."

"Then why do you apply to me?"

"That I may be sure I have the right man."

"Yes, it is indeed he! Five millions — a pretty sum, eh, Peppino?"

"Hush! — here is our man!"

The clerk seized his pen and Peppino his beads; one was writing and the other praying, when the door opened.

Danglars looked radiant with joy; the banker accompanied him to the door.

Peppino followed Danglars.

According to the arrangements, the carriage was waiting at the door. The guide held the door open. Guides are useful people, who will turn their hands to anything. Danglars leaped into the carriage like a young man of twenty. The cicerone reclosed the door, and sprang up by the side of the coachman. Peppino mounted the seat behind.

"Will your excellency visit St. Peter's?" asked the cicerone.

"I did not come to Rome to see," said Danglars aloud; then he added softly with an avaricious smile, "I came to touch!" and he tapped his pocketbook, in which he had just placed a letter.

"Then your excellency is going ——"

"To the hotel."

"Casa Pastrini!" said the cicerone to the coachman, and the carriage drove rapidly on.

Ten minutes afterwards the baron entered his apartment, and Peppino stationed himself on the bench outside the door of the hotel, after having whispered something in the ear of one of the descendants of Marius and the Gracchi whom we noticed at the beginning of the chapter, who immediately ran down the road leading to the Capitol at his fullest speed.

Danglars was tired and sleepy; he therefore went to bed, placing his pocketbook under his pillow.

Peppino had a little spare time, so he had a game of *mora* with the *facchina*, lost three crowns, and then, to console himself, drank a bottle of vin d'Orvieto.

The next morning Danglars awoke late, though he went to bed so early; he had not slept well for five or six nights, even if he had slept at all. He breakfasted heartily; and caring little, as he said, for the beauties of the Eternal City, ordered post-horses at noon. But Danglars had not reckoned upon the formalities of the police and the idleness of the posting-master. The horses only arrived at two o'clock, and the cicerone did not bring the passport till three. All these preparations had collected a number of idlers around the door of Maître Pastrini's; the descendants of Marius and the Gracchi were also not wanting. The baron walked triumphantly through the crowd, who for the sake of gain styled him "your excellency." As Danglars had hitherto contented himself with being called a baron, he felt rather flattered at the title of excellency,

and distributed a dozen pauls among the *canaille*, who were ready, for twelve more, to call him "your highness."

"Which road?" asked the postilion in Italian.

"The Ancona road," replied the baron.

Maître Pastrini interpreted the question and answer, and the horses galloped off.

Danglars intended travelling to Venice, where he would receive one part of his fortune, and then proceeding to Vienna, where he would find the rest, he meant to take up his residence in the latter town, which he had been told was a city of pleasure.

He had scarcely advanced three leagues out of Rome when daylight began to disappear. Danglars had not intended starting so late, or he would have remained. He put his head out, and asked the postilion how long it would be before they reached the next town.

"*Non capisco*," was the reply.

Danglars bent his head, which he meant to imply, "Very well."

The carriage again moved on.

"I will stop at the first posting-house," said Danglars to himself. He still felt the same self-satisfaction which he had experienced the previous evening, and which had procured him so good a night's rest. He was luxuriously stretched in a good English calèche, with double springs; he was drawn by four good horses at a full gallop; he knew the relay to be at a distance of seven leagues. What subject of meditation could present itself to the banker so fortunately become bankrupt?

Danglars thought for ten minutes upon his wife in Paris; another ten minutes upon his daughter, travelling about with Mademoiselle d'Armilly; the same period was given to his creditors, and the manner in which he intended spending their money, and then, having no subject left for contemplation, he shut his eyes and fell asleep.

Now and then a jolt, more violent than the rest, caused him to open his eyes; then he felt that he was still carried with the same vast rapidity over the country, so thickly strewn with broken aqueducts, which look like granite giants petrified in the midst of their course. But the night was cold, dull, and rainy; and it was much more pleasant for a traveller to remain in the warm carriage than to put his head out of the window to make inquiries of a postilion, whose only answer was "*Non capisco.*"

Danglars, therefore, continued to sleep, saying to himself that he would be sure to awake at the posting-house.

The carriage stopped. Danglars fancied they had reached the long-desired point; he opened his eyes, looked through the window, expecting to find himself in the midst of some town, or at least village; but he saw nothing but a kind of ruin, whence three or four men went and came like shadows. Danglars waited for a moment, expecting the postilion to come and demand payment, having finished his stage. He intended taking advantage of the opportunity to make inquiries of the new conductor; but the horses were unharnessed, and others put in their places without any one claiming money from the traveller. Danglars, astonished, opened the door; but a strong hand pushed him back, and the carriage rolled on.

The baron was completely roused.

"Eh!" he said to the postilion — "eh, *mio caro*?"

This was another little piece of Italian the baron had learned from hearing his daughter sing Italian duets with Cavalcanti.

But *mio caro* replied not. Danglars then opened the window.

"Come, my friend," he said, thrusting his hand through the opening, "where are we going?"

"*Dentro la testa!*" answered a solemn and imperious voice, accompanied by a menacing gesture.

Danglars thought *dentro la testa* meant "Put in your head!" He was making rapid progress in Italian.



He obeyed, not without some uneasiness, which, momentarily increasing, caused his mind, instead of being as unoccupied as it was when he began his journey, to fill with ideas which were very likely to keep a traveller awake, more especially one in such a situation as Danglars. His eyes acquired that quality which in the first moment of strong emotion enables them to see distinctly, and which afterwards fails from being too much taxed. Before we are alarmed, we see correctly; when we are alarmed, we see double; and when we have been alarmed, we see nothing but trouble.

Danglars observed a man in a cloak galloping at the right hand of the carriage.

"Some gendarme!" he exclaimed. "Can I have been signalled by the French telegraph to the pontifical authorities?" He resolved to end his anxiety. "Where are you leading me?" he asked. "*Dentro la testa!*" replied the same voice, with the same menacing accent.

Danglars turned to the left: another man on horseback was galloping on that side.

"Decidedly!" said Danglars, with the perspiration on his forehead, "I must be taken." And he threw himself back in the calèche, not this time to sleep, but to think. Directly afterwards the moon rose. He then saw the great aqueducts, those stone phantoms which he had before remarked; only then they were on the right hand; now they were on the left. He understood that they had described a circle, and were bringing him back to Rome.

"Oh! misfortune," he cried, "they must have obtained my arrest!"

The carriage continued to roll on with frightful speed. A terrible hour elapsed, for every spot they passed indicated they were returning on the road. At length he saw a dark mass, against which it seemed the carriage must dash; but it turned around, leaving behind it the mass, which was no other than one of the ramparts encircling Rome.

"Oh, ho!" cried Danglars; "we are not returning to Rome; then it is not justice which is pursuing me! Gracious heavens! another idea presents itself; what if they should be——"

His hair stood on end. He remembered those interesting stories, so little believed in Paris, respecting Roman bandits; he remembered the adventures that Albert de Morcerf had related when it was intended he should marry Mademoiselle Eugenie.

"They are robbers, perhaps!" he muttered.

Just then the carriage rolled on something harder than the gravelled road. Danglars hazarded a look on both sides of the road, and perceived monuments of a singular form; and his mind now recalled all the details Morcerf had related, and comparing them with his own situation, he felt sure he must be on the Appian Way. On the left, in a sort of valley, he perceived a circular excavation. It was Caracalla's circle. On a word from the man who rode at the side of the carriage, it stopped. At the same time the door was opened.

"*Scendi!*" exclaimed a commanding voice.

Danglars instantly descended; though he did not yet speak Italian, he understood it very well. More dead than alive, he looked around him. Four men surrounded him, besides the postilion.

"*Di quà,*" said one of the men, descending a little path leading out of the Appian Way. Danglars followed his guide without opposition, and had no occasion to turn around to see whether the three others were following him. Still it appeared as though they stopped at equal distances from one another, like sentinels. After walking for about ten minutes, during which Danglars did not exchange a single word with his guide, he found himself between a hillock and a clump of high weeds; three men, standing silent, formed a triangle, of which he was the centre. He wished to speak, but his tongue refused to move.

"*Avanti!*" said the same sharp and imperative voice.

This time Danglars had double reason to understand, for if the word and gesture had not explained the speaker's meaning, it was clearly expressed by the man walking behind him, who pushed him so rudely that he struck against the guide. This guide was our friend Peppino, who dashed into a thicket of high weeds, through a path which none but lizards or polecats could have imagined to be an open road. Peppino stopped before a pit overhung by thick hedges; the pit, half open, afforded a passage to the young man, who disappeared like the evil spirits in the fairy tales. The voice and gesture of the man who followed Danglars ordered him to do the same. There was no longer any doubt: the bankrupt was in the hands of the Roman banditti. Danglars acquitted himself like a man placed between two dangerous positions, and who is rendered brave by fear. Notwithstanding his large stomach, certainly not intended to penetrate the fissures of an Indian road, he slid down like Peppino, and closing his eyes, fell upon his feet. As he touched the ground he opened his eyes. The path was wide, but dark. Peppino, who cared little for being recognized now that he was in his own territories, struck a light and lit a torch. Two other men descended after Danglars, forming the rear-guard; pushing Danglars whenever he happened to stop, they arrived by a gentle declivity at the centre of a cross-road of sinister appearance. Indeed, the walls, hollowed out in sepulchres, placed one above the other, seemed, in contrast with the white stones, to open their large dark eyes, like those which we see on the faces of the dead. A sentinel struck his carbine against his left hand.

"Who goes there?" he cried.

"Friends, friends!" said Peppino, "but where is the captain?"

"There!" said the sentinel, pointing over his shoulder to a sort of large hall, hollowed out of the rock, the lights from which shone into the passage through the large arched openings.

"Fine spoil, captain! — fine spoil!" said Peppino, in Italian, and, taking Danglars by the collar of his coat, he dragged him to an opening resembling a door, through which they entered the hall of which the captain appeared to have made his dwelling-place.

"Is this the man?" asked the captain, who was attentively reading Plutarch's "Life of Alexander."

"Himself, captain — himself."

"Very well; show him to me."

At this rather impertinent order, Peppino raised his torch to Danglars's face, who hastily withdrew, that he might not have his eyelashes burned. His agitated features presented the appearance of pale and hideous terror.

"The man is tired," said the captain, "conduct him to his bed."

"Oh!" murmured Danglars, "that bed is probably one of the coffins hollowed in the wall, and the sleep I shall enjoy will be death from one of the poniards I see glistening in the shade."

From the depths of the hall were seen to rise from their beds of dried leaves or calfskin the companions of the man who had been found by Albert de Morcerf reading "Cæsar's Commentaries," and by Danglars studying the "Life of Alexander." The banker uttered a groan and followed his guide; he neither supplicated nor exclaimed. He no longer possessed strength, will, power, or feeling; he followed where they led him. At length he found himself at the foot of a staircase, and he mechanically lifted his foot five or six times. Then a low door was opened before him, and, bending his head to avoid striking his forehead, he entered a small room cut out of the rock. The cell was clean, though naked; and dry, though situated at an immeasurable distance under the earth. Danglars, on beholding it, brightened, fancying it a type of safety.

"Oh, God be praised!" he said; "it is a real bed!"

"*Ecco!*" said the guide, and pushing Danglars into the cell, he closed the door upon him.

A bolt grated; Danglars was a prisoner; besides, had there been no bolt, it would have been impossible for him to pass through the midst of the garrison who held the catacombs of St. Sebastian, encamped around a master whom our readers must have recognized as the famous Luigi Vampa. Danglars, too, had recognized the bandit, whose existence he would not believe when Albert de Morcerf mentioned him in Paris; and not only did he recognize him, but also the cell in which Albert had been confined, and which was probably kept for the accommodation of strangers. These recollections were dwelt upon with some pleasure by Danglars, and restored him to some degree of tranquillity. Since the bandits had not dispatched him at once, he felt that they would not kill him at all. They had arrested him for the purpose of robbery, and as he had only a few louis about him, he doubted not he would be ransomed. He remembered that Morcerf had been taxed at 4,000 crowns; and as he considered himself of much greater importance than Morcerf, he fixed his own price at 8,000 crowns; 8,000 crowns amounted to 48,000 livres; he would then have about 5,050,000 francs. With this sum he could manage to keep out of difficulties.

Therefore, tolerably secure in being able to extricate himself from his position, provided he were not rated at the unreasonable sum of 5,050,000 francs, he stretched himself on his bed, and after turning around two or three times, fell asleep with the tranquillity of the hero whose life Luigi Vampa was studying.

## CHAPTER CXVI.

## LUIGI VAMPA'S BILL OF FARE.

WE awake from every sleep except the one dreaded by Danglars. He awoke. To a Parisian accustomed to silken curtains, walls hung with velvet drapery, and the soft perfume of burning wood, the white smoke of which diffuses itself in graceful curves around the room, the appearance of the whitewashed cell which greeted his eyes on awakening seemed like the continuation of some disagreeable dream. But in such a situation a single moment suffices to change the strongest doubt into certainty.

"Yes, yes," he murmured, "I am in the hands of the brigands of whom Albert de Morcerf spoke."

His first idea was to breathe, that he might know whether he was wounded. He borrowed this from "Don Quixote," the only book he had ever read, but which he still lightly remembered.

"No," he cried, "they have not wounded, but perhaps they have robbed me!" and he thrust his hands into his pockets.

They were untouched; the hundred louis he had reserved for his journey from Rome to Venice were in his trousers pocket, and in that of his great-coat he found the little note-case containing his letter of credit for 5,050,000 francs.

"Singular bandits!" he exclaimed; "they have left me my purse and pocketbook. As I was saying last night, they intend me to be ransomed. Holla! here is my watch! Let me see what time it is."

Danglars's watch, one of Breguet's *chef-d'œuvres*, which he had carefully wound up on the previous night, struck half-past five. Without this Danglars would have been quite ignorant of the time, for daylight did not reach his cell. Should he demand an explanation of the bandits, or should he wait patiently for them to propose it? The last alternative seemed the most prudent, so he waited until twelve o'clock. During all this time a sentinel, who had been relieved at eight o'clock, had been watching at his door.

Danglars suddenly felt a strong inclination to see the person who kept watch over him. He had remarked that a few rays, not of daylight, but from a lamp, penetrated through the ill-jointed planks of the door; he approached it just as the brigand was refreshing himself with a mouthful of brandy, which, owing to the leather bottle containing it, sent forth an odor which was extremely unpleasant to Danglars.

"Faugh!" he exclaimed, retreating to the extreme corner of his cell. At twelve this man was replaced by another functionary, and Danglars, wishing to catch sight of his new guardian, approached the door again. He was an athletic, gigantic bandit, with large eyes, thick lips, and a flat nose; his red hair fell in dishevelled masses like snakes around his shoulders.

"Ah! ah!" cried Danglars, "this fellow is more like an ogre than anything else; however, I am rather too old and tough to be very good eating!"

We see that Danglars was quite collected enough to jest: at the same time, as though to disprove the ogreish propensities, the man took some black bread, cheese, and onions from his wallet, which he began devouring voraciously.

"May I be hanged," said Danglars, glancing at the bandit's dinner through the crevices of the door—"may I be hanged if I can understand how people can eat such filth!" and he withdrew to seat himself upon his goatskin, which recalled to him the smell of brandy.

But the secrets of nature are incomprehensible, and there are certain invitations contained in even the coarsest food which appeal very irresistibly to a fasting stomach. Danglars felt his own not to be very well supplied just then; and gradually the man appeared less ugly, the bread less black, and the cheese more fresh, while those dreadful vulgar onions recalled to his mind certain sauces and side-dishes which his cook prepared in a very superior manner whenever he said, "M. Deniseau, let me have a nice little *fricassée* to-day." He rose and knocked at the door; the bandit raised his head. Danglars knew that he was heard, so he redoubled his blows.

"*Che cosa?*" asked the bandit.

"Come, come," said Danglars, tapping his fingers against the door, "I think it is quite time to think of giving me something to eat!"

But whether he did not understand him, or whether he had received no orders respecting the nourishment of Danglars, the giant, without answering, recommenced his dinner.

Danglars felt his pride hurt, and not wishing to commit himself with the brute, threw himself down again on his goatskin, and did not breathe another word.

Four hours passed by; the giant was replaced by another bandit. Danglars, who really began to experience sundry gnawings at the stomach, rose softly, and again applied his eyes to the crack of the door, and recognized the intelligent countenance of his guide. It was indeed Peppino, who was preparing to mount guard as comfortably as possible by seating himself opposite to the door, and placing between his legs an earthen pan, containing chick-peas stewed with bacon. Near the pan he also placed a pretty little basket of grapes and a bottle of vin d'Orvieto. Peppino was decidedly an epicure. While witnessing these preparations, Danglars's mouth watered. "Come," he said to himself, "let me try if he will be more tractable than the other!" and he tapped gently at the door.



"Coming!" exclaimed Peppino, who, from frequenting the house of Maître Pastrini, understood French perfectly.

Danglars immediately recognized him as the man who had called out in such a furious manner, "Put in your head!" But this was not the time for recrimination, so he assumed his most agreeable manner, and said with a gracious smile:

"Excuse me, sir, but are they not going to give me any dinner?"

"Does your excellency happen to be hungry?"

"Happen to be hungry! that's excellent, when I have not eaten for twenty-four hours!" muttered Danglars. Then he added, aloud, "Yes, sir, I am hungry — very hungry."

"What would your excellency like?" and Peppino placed his pan on the ground so that the steam rose directly under the nostrils of Danglars. "Give your orders."

"Have you kitchens here?"

"Kitchens? — of course! complete ones."

"And cooks?"

"Excellent!"

"Well! a fowl, fish, game, it signifies little, so that I eat."

"As your excellency pleases! You mentioned a fowl, I think?"

"Yes, a fowl."

Peppino, turning around, shouted, "A fowl for his excellency!"

His voice yet echoed in the archway, when a young man, handsome, graceful, and half naked, appeared, bearing a fowl in a silver dish on his head, without the assistance of his hands.

"I could almost believe myself at the Café de Paris!" murmured Danglars.

"Here, your excellency!" said Peppino, taking the fowl from the young bandit, and placing it on the worm-eaten

table, which, with a stool and the goatskin bed, formed the entire furniture of the cell.

Danglars asked for a knife and fork.

"Here, excellency," said Peppino, offering him a little blunt knife and a boxwood fork.

Danglars took the knife in one hand and the fork in the other, and was about to cut up the fowl.

"Pardon me, excellency," said Peppino, placing his hand on the banker's shoulder; "people pay here before they eat. They might not be satisfied, and ——"

"Ah! ah!" thought Danglars, "this is no longer like Paris, without reckoning that I shall probably be fleeced! Never mind, I will carry it off well! I have always heard how cheap poultry is in Italy; I should think a fowl is worth but twelve sous at Rome."

"There," he said, throwing a louis down.

Peppino picked up the louis, and Danglars again prepared to carve the fowl.

"Stay a moment, your excellency!" said Peppino, rising; "you still owe me something."

"I said they would fleece me," thought Danglars; but resolving to resist the extortion, he said, "Come, how much do I owe you for this fowl?"

"Your excellency has given me a louis on account."

"A louis on account for a fowl?"

"Certainly; and your excellency now owes me 4,999 louis!"

Danglars opened his enormous eyes on hearing this gigantic joke.

"Come, come, this is very droll — very amusing — I allow; but, as I am very hungry, pray allow me to eat. Stay, here is another louis for you."

"Then that will make only 4,998 louis," said Peppino, with the same indifference. "I shall get them all in time."

"Oh! as for that," said Danglars, angry at his perseverance in the jest — "as for that, you will never succeed."

Go to the devil! You do not know with whom you have to deal!"

Peppino made a sign, and the youth hastily removed the fowl.

Danglars threw himself upon his goatskin, and Peppino, reclosing the door, again began eating his peas and bacon. Though Danglars could not see Peppino, the noise of his teeth allowed no doubt as to his occupation. He was certainly eating, and noisily, too, like an ill-bred man.

"Brute!" said Danglars.

Peppino pretended not to hear him, and, without even turning his head, continued to eat slowly.

Danglars's stomach felt so empty, it seemed as though it would be impossible ever to fill it again; still he had patience for another half-hour, which appeared to him like a century. He again rose and went to the door.

"Come, sir, do not keep me starving here any longer, but tell me what they want."

"Nay, your excellency, it is you should tell us what you want. Give orders, and we will execute them."

"Then open the door directly."

Peppino obeyed.

"*Pardieu!* I want something to eat! To eat! Do you hear?"

"Are you hungry?"

"Come, you understand me."

"What would your excellency like to eat?"

"A piece of dry bread, since the fowls are beyond all price in this accursed place."

"Bread! Very well. Holla, there! Some bread!" he exclaimed. The youth brought a small loaf.

"How much?" asked Danglars.

"Four thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight louis," said Peppino. "You have paid two louis in advance."

"What! 100,000 francs for a loaf?"

"One hundred thousand francs!" repeated Peppino.

"But you asked only 100,000 for a fowl!"

"We have a fixed price for all our provisions. It signifies nothing whether you eat much or little — whether you have ten dishes or one — it is always the same price."

"What! still keeping up this silly jest? My dear fellow, it is perfectly ridiculous — stupid! You had better tell me at once that you intend starving me to death."

"Oh, dear, no, your excellency, unless you intend to commit suicide. Pay and eat."

"And what am I to pay with, brute?" said Danglars, enraged. "Do you suppose I carry 100,000 francs in my pocket?"

"Your excellency has 5,050,000 francs in your pocket; that will be fifty fowls at 100,000 francs apiece, and half a fowl for 50,000."

Danglars shuddered. The bandage fell from his eyes, and he understood the joke, which he did not think quite so stupid as he had done just before.

"Come," he said, "if I pay you the 100,000 francs, will you be satisfied, and allow me to eat at my ease?"

"Certainly," said Peppino.

"But how can I pay them?"

"Oh, nothing easier; you have an account opened with Messrs. Thomson & French, Via del Banchi, Rome. Give me a bill for 4,998 louis on these gentlemen, and our banker shall take it."

Danglars thought it as well to comply with a good grace; so he took the pen, ink, and paper Peppino offered him, wrote the bill and signed it.

"Here," he said, "here is a bill at sight."

"And here is your fowl."

Danglars sighed while he carved the fowl; it appeared very thin for the price it had cost. As for Peppino, he read the paper attentively, put it in his pocket, and continued eating his peas.

## CHAPTER CXVII.

## THE PARDON.

THE next day Danglars was again hungry; certainly the air of that dungeon was very appetizing. The prisoner expected that he would be at no expense that day, for, like an economical man, he had concealed half of his fowl and a piece of the bread in the corner of his cell. But he had no sooner eaten than he felt thirsty; he had forgotten that. He struggled against his thirst till his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth; then, no longer able to resist, he called out. The sentinel opened the door; it was a new face. He thought it would be better to transact business with his old acquaintance; so he sent for Peppino.

"Here I am, your excellency," said Peppino, with an eagerness which Danglars thought favorable to him. "What do you want?"

"Something to drink."

"Your excellency knows that wine is beyond all price near Rome."

"Then give me water," cried Danglars, endeavoring to parry the blow.

"Oh, water is even more scarce than wine, your excellency; there has been such a drought!"

"Come," thought Danglars, "we are going to repeat the old story." And while he smiled as he attempted to regard the affair as a joke, he felt his temples moist with perspiration.

"Come, my friend," said Danglars, seeing he made no

impression on Peppino, "you will not refuse me a glass of wine?"

"I have already told you that we do not sell retail."

"Well, then, let me have a bottle of the least expensive."

"They are all the same price."

"And what is that?"

"Twenty-five thousand francs per bottle."

"Tell me," cried Danglars, in a voice of extreme bitterness — "tell me that you wish to despoil me of all; it will be sooner over than devouring me piecemeal."

"It is possible such may be the master's intention."

"The master! — who is he?"

"The person to whom you were conducted yesterday."

"Where is he?"

"Here."

"Let me see him."

"Certainly." And the next moment Luigi Vampa appeared before Danglars.

"You sent for me?" he said to the prisoner.

"Are you, sir, the chief of the people who brought me here?"

"Yes, your excellency. What then?"

"How much do you require for my ransom?"

"Merely the 5,000,000 francs you have about you."

Danglars felt a dreadful spasm dart through his heart.

"But this is all I have left in the world," he said, "out of an immense fortune. If you deprive me of that, take away my life also."

"We are forbidden to shed your blood."

"And by whom are you forbidden?"

"By him we obey."

"You do, then, obey some one?"

"Yes; a chief."

"I thought you said you were the chief?"

"So I am of these men; but there is another over me."

"And did your superior tell you to treat me thus?"

"Yes."

"But my purse will be exhausted."

"Probably."

"Come," said Danglars, "will you take a million?"

"No."

"Two millions? Three? Four? Come—four? I will give them to you on condition that you let me go."

"Why do you offer 4,000,000 for what is worth 5,000,000? That is a kind of usury, banker, I do not understand."

"Take all, then! Take all, I tell you, and kill me!"

"Come, calm yourself. You will excite your blood, and that would produce an appetite it would require a million a day to satisfy. Be more economical!"

"But when I have no more money left to pay you?" asked the infuriated Danglars.

"Then you must suffer hunger."

"Suffer hunger?" said Danglars, becoming pale.

"Most likely," replied Vampa, coolly.

"But you say you do not wish to kill me?"

"No."

"And yet you will let me perish with hunger?"

"Ah! that is a different thing!"

"Well, then, wretches!" cried Danglars, "I will defy your infamous calculations; I would rather die at once; you may torture—torment—kill me—but you shall not have my signature again."

"As your excellency pleases," said Vampa, as he left the cell.

Danglars, raving, threw himself on the goatskin.

Who could these men be? Who was the invisible chief? What could be his projects towards him? And why, when every one else was allowed to be ransomed, might he not also be? Oh, yes! certainly a speedy, sudden death would be a fine means of deceiving these remorseless enemies, who appeared to pursue him with such incomprehensible vengeance. But to die! For the first time in his life, Danglars contemplated death with a

mixture of dread and desire; the time had come when the implacable spectre which exists in the mind of every human creature arrested his sight, and called out with every pulsation of his heart, "Thou shalt die!"

Danglars resembled a timid animal excited in the chase: first it flies, then despairs, and, at last, by the very force of desperation, succeeds in escaping. Danglars meditated an escape. But the walls were solid rock; a man was sitting reading at the only outlet to the cell; and behind that man figures armed with guns continually passed.

His resolution not to sign lasted two days, after which he offered a million for some food.

They sent him a magnificent supper and took his million.

From this time the prisoner resolved to suffer no longer, but to yield to all his exigencies. At the end of twelve days, after having made a splendid dinner, he reckoned his accounts, and found he had only 50,000 francs left. Then a strange reaction took place; he who had just abandoned 5,000,000 endeavored to save the 50,000 francs he had left; and sooner than give them up, he resolved to enter again upon his life of privation; he yielded to rays of hope resembling madness. He, who for so long a time had forgotten God, began to think that miracles were possible; that the accursed cave might be discovered by the officers of the Papal States, who would release him; that then he would have 50,000 francs remaining, which would be sufficient to save him from starvation; and, finally, he prayed that this sum might be preserved to him — and, as he prayed, he wept.

Three days passed thus, during which his prayers were frequent, if not heartfelt. Sometimes he was delirious, and fancied he saw an old man stretched on a pallet. He, also, was dying of hunger.

On the fourth he was no longer a man, but a living corpse. He had picked up every crumb that had been left from his former meals, and was beginning to eat the mat-



ting which covered the floor of his cell. Then he entreated Peppino, as he would a guardian angel, to give him food; he offered him 1,000 francs for a mouthful of bread.

But Peppino did not answer.

On the fifth day he dragged himself to the door of the cell.

"Are you not a Christian?" he said, falling on his knees; "do you wish to assassinate a man who, in the eyes of Heaven, is a brother? Oh, my former friends! my former friends!" he murmured, and fell with his face to the ground. Then, rising with a species of despair, he exclaimed, "The chief! the chief!"

"Here I am!" said Vampa, instantly appearing; "what do you want?"

"Take my last gold," muttered Danglars, holding out his pocketbook, "and let me live here; I ask no more for liberty; I only ask to live."

"Then you must suffer a great deal?"

"Oh, yes! yes! cruelly!"

"Still there have been men who suffered more than you."

"I do not think so."

"Yes; those who have died of hunger."

Danglars thought of the old man whom in his hours of delirium he had seen groaning on his bed. He struck his forehead on the ground and groaned.

"Yes," he said, "there have been some who have suffered more than I have, but then they must have been martyrs, at least."

"Do you repent?" asked a deep, solemn voice, which caused Danglars's hair to stand on end. His feeble eye endeavored to distinguish objects, and behind the bandit he saw a man enveloped in a cloak, half lost in the shadow of a stone column.

"Of what must I repent?" stammered Danglars.

"Of the evil you have done," said the voice.

"Oh, yes! oh, yes! I do indeed repent." And he struck his breast with his emaciated fist.

"Then I forgive you," said the man, dropping his cloak, and advancing to the light.

"The Count of Monte-Cristo!" said Danglars, more pale from terror than he had been just before from hunger and misery.

"You are mistaken—I am not the Count of Monte-Cristo!"

"Then who are you?"

"I am he whom you sold and dishonored—I am he whose betrothed you prostituted—I am he upon whom you trampled that you might raise yourself to fortune—I am he whose father you condemned to die of hunger—I am he whom you also condemned to starvation, and who yet forgives you, because he hopes to be forgiven—I am Edmond Dantes!"

Danglars uttered a cry and fell prostrate.

"Rise," said the count: "your life is safe; the same good fortune has not happened to your accomplices: one is mad, the other dead. Keep the 50,000 francs you have left. I give them to you. The 500,000, you stole from the hospitals have been restored to them by an unknown hand. And now eat and drink; I will entertain you to-night. Vampa, when this man is satisfied, let him be free."

Danglars remained prostrate while the count withdrew; when he raised his head, he saw nothing more than a kind of shadow disappearing in the passage, before which the bandits bowed.

According to the count's directions, Danglars was waited on by Vampa, who brought him the best wine and fruits of Italy; then, having conducted him to the road, and pointed to his post-chaise, he left him leaning against a tree. He remained there all night, not knowing where he was. When daylight dawned, he saw that he was near a stream; he was thirsty, and dragged himself towards it. As he stooped down to drink, he perceived that his hair had become quite white.

## CHAPTER CXVIII.

## THE FIFTH OF OCTOBER.

It was about six o'clock in the evening; an opal-colored light, through which an autumnal sun shed its golden rays, descended on the blue sea. The heat of the day had gradually decreased, and a light breeze arose, seeming like the respiration of nature on awakening from the burning siesta of the south; a delicious zephyr played along the coasts of the Mediterranean, and wafted from shore to shore the sweet perfume of plants, mingled with the fresh smell of the sea.

A light yacht, chaste and elegant in its form, was gliding amid the first dews of night over the immense lake extending from Gibraltar to the Dardanelles, and from Tunis to Venice. The motion resembled that of a swan with its wings opened towards the wind, gliding on the water. It advanced, at the same time swiftly and gracefully, leaving behind it a glittering track. By degrees the sun disappeared behind the western horizon; but, as though to prove the truth of the fanciful ideas in heathen mythology, its indiscreet rays appeared on the summit of each wave, seeming to reveal that the god of fire had just enfolded himself in the bosom of Amphitrite, who in vain endeavored to hide her lover beneath her azure mantle. The yacht moved rapidly on, though there did not appear to be sufficient wind to ruffle the curls on the head of a young girl. Standing on the prow was a tall man, of a dark complexion, who saw with dilating eyes that they were approaching a dark mass

of land in the shape of a cone, rising from the midst of the waves like the hat of a Catalan.

"Is that Monte-Cristo?" asked the traveller, to whose orders the yacht was for the time submitted, in a melancholy voice.

"Yes, your excellency," said the captain, "we have reached it."

"We have reached it!" repeated the traveller, in an accent of indescribable sadness. Then he added, in a low tone, "Yes; that is the haven," and then he again plunged into a train of thought, the character of which was better revealed by a sad smile than it would have been by tears. A few minutes afterwards, a flash of light, which was extinguished instantly, was seen on the land, and the sound of firearms reached the yacht.

"Your excellency," said the captain, "that was the land signal; will you answer it yourself?"

"What signal?"

The captain pointed towards the island, up the side of which ascended a volume of smoke, increasing as it rose.

"Ah, yes," he said, as if awakening from a dream. "Give it to me."

The captain gave him a loaded carbine; the traveller slowly raised it, and fired in the air. Ten minutes afterwards, the sails were brailled, and they cast anchor about one hundred paces from the little harbor. The canoe was already in the sea, loaded with four rowers and a pilot. The traveller descended, and instead of sitting down at the stern of the boat, which had been decorated with a blue carpet for his accommodation, stood up with his arms crossed. The rowers waited, their oars half lifted out of water, like birds drying their wings.

"Proceed!" said the traveller. The eight oars fell into the sea simultaneously, without splashing a drop of water, and the boat, yielding to the impulsion, glided forward. In an instant they found themselves in a little

harbor, formed in a natural creek; the boat touched the fine sand.

"Will your excellency be so good as to mount the shoulders of two of our men? They will carry you ashore."

The young man answered this invitation with a gesture of indifference, and, stepping out of the boat, the sea immediately rose to his waist.

"Ah! your excellency," murmured the pilot, "you should not have done so; our master will scold us for it."

The young man continued to advance, following the sailors, who chose a firm footing. After about thirty paces, they landed; the young man stamped on the ground to shake off the wet, and looked around for some one to show him his road, for it was quite dark. Just as he turned, a hand rested on his shoulder, and a voice which made him shudder, exclaimed:

"Good evening, Maximilian, you are punctual; thank you."

"Ah, is it you, count?" said the young man, in an almost joyful accent, pressing Monte-Cristo's hand with both his own.

"Yes; you see I am as exact as you are. But you are dripping, my dear fellow; you must change your clothes, as Calypso said to Telemachus. Come, I have a habitation prepared for you, in which you will soon forget fatigue and cold."

Monte-Cristo perceived that the young man had turned around; indeed, Morrel saw with surprise that the men who had brought him had left without being paid or uttering a word. Already the sound of their oars might be heard as they returned to the yacht.

"Oh, yes," said the count; "you were looking for the sailors."

"Yes; I paid them nothing, and yet they are gone."

"Never mind that, Maximilian," said Monte-Cristo, smiling. "I have made an agreement with the navy, that

the access to my island shall be free of all charge. I have made a bargain."

Morrel looked at the count with surprise.

"Count," he said, "you are not the same here as in Paris."

"How so?"

"Here you laugh."

The count's brow clouded.

"You are right to call me to myself, Maximilian," he said; "I was delighted to see you again, and forgot for the moment that all happiness is fleeting."

"Oh, no, no, count," cried Maximilian, seizing the count's hands; "pray laugh; be happy, and prove to me, by your indifference, that life is endurable to sufferers. Oh, how charitable, kind, and good you are; you affect this gayety to inspire me with courage."

"You are wrong, Morrel; I was really happy."

"Then you forget me; so much the better."

"How so?"

"Yes; for as the gladiator said to the emperor when he entered the arena, 'He who is going to die salutes you.'"

"Then you are not consoled?" asked the count, surprised.

"Oh!" exclaimed Morrel, with a glance full of bitter reproach, "do you think it possible I could be?"

"Listen," said the count. "Do you understand the meaning of my words? You cannot take me for a commonplace man—a mere rattle emitting a vague and senseless noise. When I ask you if you are consoled, I speak to you as a man for whom the human heart has no secrets. Well, Morrel, let us both examine the depths of your heart. Do you still feel the same feverish impatience of grief which made you start like a wounded lion? Have you still that devouring thirst which can only be appeased in the grave? Are you still actuated by the regret which drags the living to the pursuit of death, or are you only suffering from the prostration

of fatigue and the weariness of hope deferred? Has the loss of memory rendered it impossible for you to weep? Oh! my dear friend, if this be the case, if you can no longer weep, if your frozen heart be dead, if you put all your trust in God, then, Maximilian, you are consoled—do not complain.”

“Count,” said Morrel, in a firm and at the same time soft voice, “listen to me as to a man whose thoughts are raised to heaven, though he remains on earth: I come to die in the arms of a friend. Certainly, there are people whom I love; I love my sister Julie—I love her husband, Emmanuel; but I require a strong mind to smile on my last moments; my sister would be bathed in tears and fainting; I could not bear to see her suffer; Emmanuel would tear the weapon from my hand, and alarm the house with his cries. You, count, who are more than mortal, will, I am sure, lead me to death by a pleasant path, will you not?”

“My friend,” said the count, “I have still one doubt—are you weak enough to pride yourself upon your sufferings?”

“No, indeed—I am calm,” said Morrel, giving his hand to the count; “my pulse does not beat slower or faster than usual. No, I feel I have reached the goal, and I will go no further. You told me to wait and hope; do you know what you did, unfortunate adviser? I waited a month, or rather I suffered for a month! I did hope (man is a poor, wretched creature)—I did hope. What, I cannot tell: something wonderful, an absurdity, a miracle—of what nature He alone can tell who has mingled with our reason that folly we call hope. Yes, I did wait; yes, I did hope, count, and during this quarter of an hour we have been talking together, you have unconsciously wounded, tortured my heart, for every word you have uttered proved that there was no hope for me. Oh! count, I shall sleep calmly, deliciously in the arms of death!” Morrel pronounced these words with

an energy which made the count shudder. "My friend," continued Morrel, "you named the fifth of October as the term of delay you asked — to-day is the fifth of October." He took out his watch. "It is now nine o'clock — I have yet three hours to live."

"Be it so!" said the count; "come."

Morrel mechanically followed the count, and they had entered the grotto before he perceived it. He felt a carpet under his feet, a door opened, perfumes surrounded him, and a brilliant light dazzled his eyes. Morrel hesitated to advance; he dreaded the enervating effect of all that he saw. Monte-Cristo drew him in gently.

"Why should we not spend the last three hours remaining to us of life like those ancient Romans, who, when condemned by Nero, their emperor, and heir, sat down at a table covered with flowers, and gently glided into death through the perfume of heliotropes and roses?"

Morrel smiled. "As you please," he said; "death is always death — that is, forgetfulness, repose, exclusion from life, and therefore from grief." He sat down, and Monte-Cristo placed himself opposite to him. They were in the marvellous dining-room before described, where the statues had baskets on their heads always filled with fruits and flowers. Morrel had looked carelessly around, and had probably noticed nothing. "Let us talk like men," he said, looking at the count.

"Proceed!"

"Count," said Morrel, "you are the epitome of all human knowledge, and you seem to me a being descended from a wiser and more advanced world than ours."

"There is something true in what you say," said the count, with that smile which made him so handsome. "I've descended from a planet called grief."

"I believe all you tell me without questioning its



sense; in proof, you told me to live, and I did live; you told me to hope, and I almost did so. I am almost inclined to ask you, as though you had experienced death, 'Is it painful to die?'"

Monte-Cristo looked upon Morrel with indescribable tenderness.

"Yes," he said, "yes, doubtless it is painful if you violently break the outer covering which obstinately begs for life. If you plunge a dagger into your flesh, if you insinuate a bullet into your brain, which the least shock disorders, certainly, then, you will suffer pain; and you will repent quitting life for a repose you have bought at so dear a price."

"Yes; I am aware there is a secret of luxury and pain in death, as well as in life; the only thing is to understand it."

"You have spoken truly, Maximilian; according to the care we bestow upon it, death is either a friend who rocks us gently as a nurse, or an enemy who violently drags the soul from the body. Some day, when the world is much older and when mankind will be masters of all the destructive powers in nature, to serve for the general good of humanity; when mankind, as you were just saying, have discovered the secrets of death, then that death will become as sweet and voluptuous as a slumber in the arms of your beloved."

"And if you wished to die, you would choose this death, count?"

"Yes."

Morrel extended his hand. "Now I understand," he said, "why you had me brought here to this desolate spot, in the midst of the ocean, to this subterranean palace; it was because you loved me, was it not, count? It was because you loved me well enough to give me one of those sweet means of death of which we were speaking—a death without agony—a death which allows me to fade away while pronouncing Valentine's name and pressing your hand."

"Yes; you have guessed rightly, Morrel," said the count; "that is what I intended."

"Thanks! The idea that to-morrow I shall no longer suffer, is sweet to my heart."

"Do you then regret nothing?"

"No," replied Morrel.

"Not even me?" asked the count, with deep emotion.

Morrel's clear eye was for the moment clouded, then it shone with unusual lustre, and a large tear rolled down his cheek.

"What?" said the count, "do you still regret anything in the world, and yet die?"

"Oh! I entreat you," exclaimed Morrel, in a low voice, "do not speak another word, count — do not prolong my punishment."

The count fancied he was yielding, and this belief revived the horrible doubt that had overwhelmed him at the Château d'If. "I am endeavoring," he thought, "to make this man happy; I look upon this restitution as a weight thrown into the scale to balance the evil I had wrought. Now, supposing I am deceived, if this man has not been unhappy enough to merit happiness. Alas! what would become of me who can only atone for evil by doing good?" Then he said aloud, "Listen, Morrel; I see your grief is great, but still you do not like to risk your soul."

Morrel smiled sadly. "Count," he said, "I swear to you, my soul is no longer my own."

"Maximilian, you know I have no relation in the world. I have accustomed myself to regard you as my son; well, then, to save my son, I will sacrifice my life, nay, even my fortune."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you wish to quit life because you do not understand all the enjoyments which are the fruits of a large fortune. Morrel, I possess nearly a hundred millions; I give them to you; with such a fortune you can

attain every wish. Are you ambitious? Every career is open to you. Overturn the world, change its character, yield to mad ideas, be even criminal — but live.”

“Count, I have your word,” said Morrel, coldly; then, taking out his watch, he added, “it is half-past eleven.”

“Morrel, can you intend it, in my house, beneath my eyes?”

“Then let me go,” said Maximilian, “or I shall think you did not love me for my own sake, but for yours;” and he rose.

“It is well,” said Monte-Cristo, whose countenance brightened at these words; “you wish it; you are inflexible. Yes, as you said, you are indeed wretched, and a miracle alone can cure you; sit down, Morrel, and wait.”

Morrel obeyed; the count rose, and unlocking a closet with a key suspended from his gold chain, took from it a little casket, beautifully carved and chased, the corners of which represented four bending figures, similar to the Caryatides, the forms of women, symbols of the angels aspiring to heaven. He placed the casket on the table; then opening it, took out a little golden box, the top of which flew open when touched by a secret spring. This box contained an unctuous substance, partly solid, of which it was impossible to discover the color, owing to the reflection of the polished gold, sapphires, rubies, emeralds, which ornamented the box. It was a mixed mass of blue, red, and gold. The count took out a small quantity of this with a gilt spoon, and offered it to Morrel, fixing a long, steadfast glance upon him. It was then observable that the substance was greenish.

“This is what you asked for,” he said, “and what I promised to give you.”

“I thank you from the depths of my heart,” said the young man, taking the spoon from the hands of Monte-Cristo.

The count took another spoon, and again dipped it into the golden box.

"What are you going to do, my friend?" asked Morrel, arresting his hand.

"*Ma foi!* Morrel, I was thinking that I, too, am weary of life, and since an opportunity presents itself ——"

"Stay," said the young man; "you who love and are beloved; you, who have faith and hope, oh, do not follow my example; in your case it would be a crime. Adieu, my noble and generous friend, adieu; I will go and tell Valentine what you have done for me."

And slowly, though without any hesitation, only waiting to press the count's hand fervently, he swallowed the mysterious substance offered by Monte-Cristo. Then they were both silent. Ali, mute and attentive, brought the pipes and coffee, and disappeared. By degrees the lamps gradually faded in the hands of the marble statues which held them, and the perfumes appeared less powerful to Morrel. Seated opposite to him, Monte-Cristo watched him in the shadow, and Morrel saw nothing but the bright eyes of the count. An overpowering sadness took possession of the young man; his hands relaxed their hold; the objects in the room gradually lost their form and color, and his disturbed vision seemed to perceive doors and curtains open in the wall.

"Friend," he cried, "I feel that I am dying; thanks!" He made a last effort to extend his hand, but it fell powerless beside him. Then it appeared to him that Monte-Cristo smiled, not with that strange and fearful expression which had sometimes revealed to him the secrets of his heart, but with the benevolent kindness of a father for an infant. At the same time the count appeared to increase in stature; his form, nearly double its usual height, stood out in relief against the red tapestry, his black hair was thrown back, and he stood in the attitude of a menacing angel.

Morrel, overpowered, turned around in the armchair; a delicious torpor was insinuated into every vein; a change of ideas presented themselves to his brain, like a new design on the kaleidoscope; enervated, prostrated,

and breathless, he became unconscious of outward objects; he seemed to be entering that vague delirium preceding death. He wished once again to press the count's hand, but his own was unmovable; he wished to articulate a last farewell, but his tongue lay motionless and heavy in his throat, like a stone at the mouth of a sepulchre. Involuntarily his languid eyes closed; and still through his eyelashes a well-known form seemed to move amid the obscurity with which he thought himself enveloped.

The count had just opened a door. Immediately a brilliant light from the next room, or rather from the palace adjoining, shone upon the room in which he was gently gliding into his last sleep. Then he saw a woman of marvellous beauty appear on the threshold of the door separating the two rooms. Pale and sweetly smiling, she looked like an angel of mercy conjuring the angel of vengeance.

"Is it heaven that opens before me?" thought the dying man; "that angel resembles the one I have lost."

Monte-Cristo pointed Morrel to the young woman, who advanced towards him with clasped hands and a smile upon her lips.

"Valentine! Valentine!" he mentally ejaculated, but his lips uttered no sound; and as though all his strength were centred in that eternal emotion, he sighed and closed his eyes.

Valentine rushed towards him; his lips again moved.

"He is calling you," said the count; "he to whom you have confided your destiny, he from whom death would have separated you, calls you to him. Happily I vanquished death. Henceforth, Valentine, you will never again be separated on earth; since he has rushed into death to find you. Without me you both would have died. May God accept my atonement of these two existences!"

Valentine seized the count's hand, and in her irresistible impulse of joy carried it to her lips.

"Oh! thank me again!" said the count; "tell me till

you are weary that I have restored you to happiness; you do not know how much I require this assurance."

"Oh! yes, yes, I thank you with all my heart," said Valentine, "and if you doubt the sincerity of my gratitude, oh, then! ask Haydee, ask my beloved sister Haydee, who ever since our departure from France has caused me to wait patiently until this happy day, while talking to me of you."

"You then love Haydee?" asked Monte-Cristo, with an emotion he in vain endeavored to dissimulate.

"Oh, yes! with all my soul."

"Well, then, listen, Valentine," said the count; "I have a favor to ask of you."

"Of me! Oh, am I happy enough for that?"

"Yes; you have called Haydee your sister; let her become so indeed, Valentine; render to her all the gratitude you fancy you owe me; protect her, for" (the count's voice was thick with emotion) "henceforth she will be alone in the world."

"Alone in the world?" repeated a voice behind the count, "and why?"

Monte-Cristo turned around. Haydee was standing pale, motionless, looking at the count with an expression of fearful amazement.

"Because to-morrow, Haydee, you will be free; you will then assume your proper position in society; for I will not allow my destiny to overshadow yours. Daughter of a prince! I restore to you the riches and name of your father."

Haydee became pale, and, lifting her transparent hands to heaven, exclaimed in a voice hoarse with tears:

"Then you leave me, my lord?"

"Haydee, Haydee! you are young and beautiful; forget even my name, and be happy!"

"It is well," said Haydee; "your order shall be executed, my lord; I will forget even your name, and be happy." And she stepped back to retire.

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Valentine, who was supporting the head of Morrel on her shoulder, "do you not see how pale she is? Do you not see how she suffers?"

Haydee answered with a heartrending expression.

"Why should he understand this, my sister? He is my master, and I am his slave; he has the right to notice nothing."

The count shuddered at the tones of a voice which penetrated the inmost recess of his heart; his eyes met those of the young girl, and he could not bear their brilliancy.

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Monte-Cristo, "can my suspicions be correct? Haydee, would it please you not to leave me?"

"I am young," gently replied Haydee; "I love this life you have made so sweet to me, and should regret to die."

"You mean, then, that if I leave you, Haydee ——"

"I should die; yes, my lord."

"Do you then love me?"

"Oh, Valentine! he asks if I love him. Valentine, tell him if you love Maximilian."

The count felt his heart dilate and throb; he opened his arms, and Haydee, uttering a cry, sprang into them.

"Oh, yes!" she cried, "I do love you! I love you as one loves a father, brother, husband! I love you as my life, for you are the best, the noblest of created beings!"

"Let it be, then, as you wish, sweet angel; God has sustained me in my struggle with my enemies, and has given me this victory; he will not let me end my triumph with this penance. I wished to punish myself, but he has pardoned me! Love me, then, Haydee! Who knows? perhaps your love will make me forget all I wish not to remember."

"What do you mean, my lord?"

"I mean that one word from you has enlightened me more than twenty years of slow experience; I have but you in the world, Haydee; through you I again connect

myself with life — through you I shall suffer; through you rejoice!"

"Do you hear him, Valentine?" exclaimed Haydee; "he says that through me he will suffer — through *me* who would gladly yield my life for his."

The count withdrew for a moment.

"Have I discovered the truth?" he said; "but whether it be for recompense or punishment, I accept my fate. Come, Haydee, come!" and throwing his arms around the young girl's waist, he pressed the hand of Valentine and disappeared.

An hour had nearly passed, during which Valentine, breathless and motionless, watched steadfastly over Morrel. At length she felt his heart beat; a faint breath played upon his lips, a slight shudder, announcing the return of life, passed through the young man's frame. At length his eyes opened, but they were at first fixed and expressionless; then sight returned, and with it feeling and grief.

"Oh!" he cried, in an accent of despair, "the count has deceived me; I am yet living," and extending his hand towards the table, he seized a knife.

"Dearest!" exclaimed Valentine, with her adorable smile, "wake, and look on my side."

Morrel uttered a loud exclamation, and frantic, doubtful, dazzled as though by a celestial vision, he fell upon his knees.

The next morning, at daybreak, Valentine and Morrel were walking arm in arm on the seashore, Valentine relating how Monte-Cristo had appeared in her room; how he had unveiled everything; how he had revealed the crime; and, finally, how he had saved her life by allowing her to seem dead. They found the door of the grotto open, and went forth, the few remaining stars yet pressing through



the morning light. Morrel soon perceived a man standing amid the group of rocks, who was awaiting a sign from them to advance; he pointed him out to Valentine.

"Ah! it is Jacopo," she said, "the captain of the yacht;" and she beckoned him towards them.

"Do you wish to speak to us?" asked Morrel.

"I have a letter to give you, from the count."

"From the count!" murmured the two young people.

"Yes; read it."

Morrel opened the letter and read:

"MY DEAR MAXIMILIAN, — There is a felucca for you at anchor. Jacopo will conduct you to Leghorn, where M. Noirtier waits his granddaughter, whom he wishes to bless before you lead her to the altar. All that is in this grotto, my friend, my house in the Champs Elysées, and my château at Treport, are the marriage gifts bestowed by Edmond Dantes upon the son of his old master, Morrel. Mademoiselle de Villefort will share them with you; for I entreat her to give to the poor the immense fortune reverting to her from her father, now a madman, and her brother, who died last September with his mother. Tell the angel who will watch over your future destiny, Morrel, to pray sometimes for a man who, like Satan, thought himself for an instant equal to God, but who now acknowledges, with Christian humility, that God alone possesses supreme power and infinite wisdom. Perhaps those prayers may soften the remorse he feels in his heart. As for you, Morrel, this is the secret of my conduct towards you. There is neither happiness nor misery in the world; there is only the comparison of one state with another — nothing more. He who has felt the deepest grief is best able to experience supreme happiness. We must have felt what it is to die, Morrel, that we may appreciate the enjoyments of life.

"Live, then, and be happy, beloved children of my heart! and never forget that, until the day when God will deign to

reveal the future to man, all human wisdom is contained in these words, '*Wait and hope.*'

"Your friend,

EDMOND DANTES,  
"Count of Monte-Cristo."

During the perusal of this letter, which informed Valentine, for the first time, of the madness of her father and the death of her brother, she became pale, a heavy sigh escaped from her bosom, and tears, not the less painful because they were silent, ran down her cheeks; her happiness cost her very dear. Morrel looked around uneasily.

"But," he said, "the count's generosity is too overwhelming; Valentine will be satisfied with my humble fortune. Where is the count, friend? Lead me to him."

Jacopo pointed towards the horizon.

"What do you mean?" asked Valentine. "Where is the count? where is Haydee?"

"Look!" said Jacopo.

The eyes of both were fixed upon the spot indicated by the sailor, and on the blue line separating the sky from the Mediterranean Sea they perceived a large white sail.

"Gone!" said Morrel. "Gone! Adieu, my friend! adieu, my father!"

"Gone!" murmured Valentine. "Adieu, my friend! adieu, my sister!"

"Who can say whether we shall ever see them again?" said Morrel, with tearful eyes.

"My friend," replied Valentine, "has not the count just told us that all human wisdom was contained in the words — '*Wait and hope*'?"



